Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_Y0-BRV-023

The Eversley Edition

THE LIFE OF RICHARD COBDEN

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE LIFE

OF

RICHARD COBDEN

BY

JOHN MORLEY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1908

THE LIBRARY
COLBY JUNIOR COLLEGE
NEW LONDON, N. H

DA
536
C6
M7

vol. 2

First published in The Eversley Series, 1908

17751

may 1939 1.61 (2 vols) Stechert (cur.)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XX

Miscellaneous Correspondence on Social and Political Movements

New plans for political reform—To Mr. Bright, on a new programme—A triumphal celebration—To Combe, on national expenditure—The motion for arbitration—The Peace Congress at Paris—In Paris—To Mr. Bright, on Ireland—To Mr. Bright, on Parliamentary Reform—On the English land question To Mr. Bright—On temperance Pages 1-29

CHAPTER XXI

The Don Pacifico Debate—The Papal Aggression—Correspondence with Mr. Bright on Reform—Kossuth

The Hungarian War of Independence—Cobden's denunciation of war loans—Root of Cobden's feeling about war—The affair of Don Pacifico—Issues of the debate—Death of Peel—The Papal aggression—Stock Exchange creditors—Miscellaneous notes—Peace Congress at Frankfort—The No-Popery cry—The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Deadlock of parties—Motion for negotiations with France—Doubts on Reform—To Mr. Bright, on the land question—To Mr. Bright, on Reform—Kossuth in England—To Mr. Bright in explanation—Mr. Bright and Kossuth—English opinion on Russian intervention . . 30-78

CHAPTER XXII

The Protectionists in Office

Fate of the Whig Ministry—The Protectionists in office—Revival of the League—Growth of the military spirit—Cobden's urgency for a dissolution—The general election—The Free Traders and the Ministry—Humiliation of the Protectionists—Mr. Disraeli's Budget—Fate of the first Derby Ministry . . . . . Pages 79-99

CHAPTER XXIII

The Panic of 1853

The invasion panic—Excitement of public opinion—His pamphlet: *1793 and 1853*—The war of 1793—Social state of France and of England—French feeling for Napoleon—Peace Conference at Manchester—Events of the session—Misrepresentation of the Peace movement—Visit to Oxford 100-122

CHAPTER XXIV

The Crimean War

Origin of the war—Cobden's policy compared with Palmerston's—Mortifying position of Cobden and Bright—Their steadfastness—Difficulties of a Peace party—Cobden's speeches on the war—Letters to Mr. Bright—Letters to Colonel Fitzmayer—Letters to Mr. Bright—Letters to M. Chevalier—Letters to Mr. Ashworth . 123-156

CHAPTER XXV

Death of his Son

Sudden death of his son at Weinheim—Violent grief of Mrs. Cobden—Mr. Bright's illness . . . 157-164

CHAPTER XXVI

Chinese Affairs—Cobden's Motion—The Dissolution

The affair of the *Arrow*—Cobden's motion and defeat of the Ministry—The repulse in the country—Letter from Mr. Bright on their defeat—Cobden's feeling—Mr. Bright's election at Birmingham—Cobden at Midhurst—Views of Parliamentary life . . . . Pages 165-184

CHAPTER XXVII

The Indian Mutiny—Private Affairs—Second Journey to America

The Indian Mutiny—On contact with inferior races—Sombre outlook in India—Misgivings as to the future—On the transfer of land—On the demoralisation of England by India — Change of Government — Private anxieties — Munificent friendship 185-206

CHAPTER XXVIII

Return from America—The New Ministry

The new Ministry — Arrival at Liverpool—Interview with Lord Palmerston—Refusal of office . . . 207-219

CHAPTER XXIX

The French Treaty

With Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden — Return to London—Arrival in Paris — Interview with the Emperor — The French Minister—The Ministers at home—The Emperor's hesitation — Second interview with the Emperor — Cobden receives official powers — The Emperor's deviations — Hostile feeling in France—The Treaty signed—Morality of negotiation with the Empire 220-255

CHAPTER XXX

Holiday and Return to Paris

The Italian question—Interview with Prince Metternich—At Cannes—Return to Paris—The question of Savoy—Discussion with the Emperor—Cobden's private circumstances
Pages 256-273

CHAPTER XXXI

The Tariff—The Fortification Scheme

Debates on the Treaty—Nature of the Treaty—Fresh labours in Paris—The Commission—Social intercourse—Count Persigny on the Empire—Conversation with Prince Napoleon—The proposal for fortifications—Lord Palmerston's distrust—Mr. Gladstone's position—Cobden's remonstrance—Lord Palmerston's reply—Lord John Russell's reply—Effect in Paris—M. Rouher on Lord Palmerston's speech—Prince Napoleon and Count Persigny—Delay in signing the Convention—The Conventions signed—Cobden and Mr. Bright with the Emperor—Abolition of passports—Reception of the tariff in England—His feeling about the English Government—Letter from Lord Palmerston 274-325

CHAPTER XXXII

The Policy of the Commercial Treaty

State of the question in 1843—Cobden's vindication of the Treaty—Peculiarity of Cobden's Treaty—Double operation of the Treaty—The economic circulation . 326-337

CHAPTER XXXIII

Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1859-60—Paris—Return to England

Miscellaneous correspondence, 1859-60—Mr. Bright's public appearances—Condition of political life—Napoleon III. as

a writer—The state of Europe—The Turkish question—Sober politics of Peel and Aberdeen—British rule in India—Great producers—The counties—The English working class—Last interview with the Emperor Pages 338-363

CHAPTER XXXIV

The American War—Fortification Schemes—International Law

Reception in England—The American War—Proposed changes in Maritime Law—Battles with Lord Palmerston—On Maritime Law—On China—On traders and missionaries in China—On Lord Brougham—On secession—On the *Trent* affair—To Mr. Sumner on the war—On Maritime Law—On the commercial class—On Lord Palmerston—On the American blockade—Debate on Turkey—On the Polish Insurrection—To Mr. Sumner on the American War—On the American War—Visit to the fortifications of Portsmouth—To Mr. Bright on the war—On the political torpor of the day—On privateering 364-418

CHAPTER XXXV

Correspondence with Mr. Delane

Feeling towards the *Times* newspaper—Charge of the *Times* against Mr. Bright—Cobden's protest and Mr. Delane's reply—His letter to Mr. Delane—Continuance of the controversy—Mr. Delane's virtual surrender—The merits of the controversy—Letter to the *Daily Telegraph*—Cobden's view of journalism 419-443

CHAPTER XXXVI

The Danish War—Last Speeches in Parliament—Correspondence

Denmark and the British Government—Humiliating position of Lord Palmerston—Cobden's speeches during the session—On Garibaldi's visit to London—On Free Trade in France—On the triumph of non-intervention—On blockades—On the Danish War . . . 444-459

CHAPTER XXXVII

Speech at Rochdale—The Land Question—Correspondence—Last Days and Death

Cobden's views on the Land Question—Illness after his return from Rochdale—On minority representation—To Mr. Bright—Offer of a post by the Government—To Mr. T. B. Potter—To Mr. Bright—On Canadian affairs—Journey to London—Illness and death . . Pages 460-481

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Conclusion

Traits of private character—Views on culture—His contribution to Social Reform—The new possessors of power 482-492

APPENDICES

The last letter written by Mr. Cobden—A Bibliography of Richard Cobden 493-504

INDEX 505-525

CHAPTER XX

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

1849.
Æt. 45.

Behind the merits of a policy of economy for its own sake, there was in the minds both of Cobden and of Mr. Bright and others, a general scheme for gathering up the strength of the Liberal party. The extraordinary state of the old combinations in the House of Commons was a standing incentive to such efforts as were now made in the north of England. There was to be a popular party, based on real principles and a practical programme, as distinguished from factitious catch-words and insincere cries invented for parliamentary occasions. A great association might perhaps be formed, and it was suggested that it should be called the Commons League. Financial Reform and Parliamentary Reform were the two planks of the platform. At a great meeting in Manchester in the second week of the new year, Cobden explained his ideas on the first, and Mr. Bright followed with a demand for the second. Cobden believed that the parts about Financial Reform were better received than the parts about Parliamentary Reform, even by the men in fustian jackets.[1] Meetings were held in other towns in the north; and the two champions were everywhere received with unbounded

[1] *Letter to Mrs. Cobden*, Jan. 10, 1849.

1849. Æt. 45.

cordiality. Circulars were sent out from Manchester for the formation of the new association, and between three and four thousand adhesions were received. But the new League did not grow. The leaders hardly seemed to know what it was that they wished to do. They were not sure in their tactics. Cobden thought that it ought to be a metropolitan association. Mr. Bright, on the contrary, believed that Lancashire and Yorkshire must be its centre. The scheme of the association was ambiguous. "We are asking people," said Mr. Bright, "to join for an undefined or ill-defined object, and we neither propose an end to the movement, nor a clear and open way for working it." The two chiefs were not exactly of one mind as to the true policy in the most important part of the programme. Cobden, as we have so often said, was essentially an economical, a moral, and a social reformer. He was never an enthusiast for mere reform in the machinery. Immediately after the repeal of the Corn Law, he confessed that on the question of the suffrage he had gone back. "And yet," he went on, "I am something like Peel and Free Trade. I do not oppose the principle of giving men a control over their own affairs. I must confess, however, that I am less sanguine than I used to be about the effects of a wide extension of the franchise." [1] His own favourite plan of extension through the forty-shilling freeholder only recommended itself to him because it brought with it the virtue of thrift, and the recommendation of property. Mr. Bright, though cordially acquiescing in the plan so far as it went, and as a means of bringing the old factions to a capitulation in some of the counties, always maintained that it would never enfranchise so many voters permanently as to make any real and effective change

[1] *To Mr. Sturge*, July 16, 1846.

1849.
ÆT. 45.

in the representation. Both before and after the League was dissolved, Mr. Bright insisted that "no object was worth a real and great effort, short of a thorough reform in Parliament." Although, however, there was not a sufficiently clear and concentrated unanimity to give an impulse to a new League, there was abundant room for strenuous co-operation in the work about which they were cordially agreed.

The following letter written to Mr. Bright at the close of 1848, two or three weeks before the meeting at Manchester, shows the point of view to which Cobden inclined, and to what extent—and it was not great—he differed from Mr. Bright:—

"*Dec.* 23, 1848.—Since writing to you, I have again read and reflected upon your letter. You say that the object of our meeting must be specific and general; that I must speak upon Finance, and you follow upon Parliamentary Reform; and that then a society must be organized for a general registration to carry out, I presume, both objects. I thought we had always agreed that to carry the public along with us, we should have a single and well-defined object. It is decidedly my opinion. If Parliamentary Reform were the sole object, we might after a long time probably succeed; but the two things together would be a false start, and it must end in our taking to one or the other exclusively. It is true that we joined them together in our meeting of Members of Parliament at the Free Trade Club, and that was because we did not feel ourselves on the strongest ground with the middle class even then, without the Expenditure question, and it is vastly more so now. Besides, you will admit that we could not ignore the existence of the Liverpool movement. However defective in men and money at present, they are in as good a position as we were a year after the League was

1849. ÆT. 45.

formed; and they have far more hold upon the public mind than we had even after three years' agitation. I rather think that you do not fully appreciate the extent to which the country is sympathizing with the Liverpool movement. But taking the fact to be as I have stated it, that the movement is for Financial Reform, and nobody can deny it, I am half disposed to think that it is the most useful agitation we could enter upon. The people want information and instruction upon armaments, colonies, taxation, and so forth. There is a fearful mass of prejudice and ignorance to dispel upon these subjects, and whilst these exist, you may get a reform of Parliament, but you will not get a reformed policy.

"I believe there is as much clinging to colonies at the present moment amongst the middle class as among the aristocracy; and the working people are not wiser than the rest. And as respects armaments, I do not forget that last December [1847] hardly a Liberal paper in the kingdom supported me in resisting the attempt to add to our forces. Such papers as the *Sun*, *Weekly Despatch*, *Sunday Times*, and *Liverpool Mercury*, went dead against me; and all that I could say for the rest is that they were silent. Now all these questions can be discussed most favourably in reference to the expenditure. You may reason ever so logically, but never so convincingly as through the pocket. But it will take time even to play off John Bull's acquisitiveness against his combativeness. He will not be easily persuaded that all his reliance upon brute force and courage has been a losing speculation. Already I have heard from good Liberals an expression of fear that, in my Budget, I have 'gone too far.' But I have said enough.

"And now, having stated my view of what the

1849.
ÆT. 45.

object must be, a word or two as to the *modus operandi*. And here we do not differ. I am for going at once to the registers and the forty shilling qualifications. Begin where the League left off, and avow it boldly. Nay, make it a condition, if you like, of your alliance with Liverpool that such shall be the plan. And I put it to you and Wilson, whether you think that the men who go with us for the Budget and direct taxation, will not be likely to use their votes for a reform of Parliament. I should feel very little doubt about getting nearly as much strength for the one question as the other, by merely getting people to register and qualify for retrenchment and direct taxation. Besides, I have no objection to our advocating reform, whilst advocating economy. I should myself do so. I would say—We may cut down the expenditure, as we did in 1835; but it will grow up again, as it has since, unless either the agitation were perpetual, or the Parliament were reformed. I have no objection to this line of argument. I object only to our separating ourselves from Liverpool in our organization.

"And now I think I know the feeling of the majority of the influential money-givers in Manchester, and I feel convinced that they would all give their £10 more heartily for my plan than any other. It would at once put Wilson, you, and me in a pure and disinterested light before their eyes. We should not be open to even the shade of a suspicion of wishing to arrogate to ourselves any separate line, or to use them as our party, or to make Manchester needlessly the focus of a central agitation. You would have far more strength upon the platform for my object than any other. I have only room to add —advertise a meeting to co-operate with Liverpool in Financial Reform, and make any use you like of

1849. ÆT. 45. my name. . . . I have a good opinion of Paulton's judgment. Not a word has passed between us on this subject; but I wish you would let him read my letters, and ask him to give a candid opinion on the matter in discussion."

Before the session began, he took part along with Mr. Bright in a ceremony of joyful commemoration. Peel's measure of 1846 provided that the duty on corn should expire at the end of three years (see vol. i. p. 381). The day arrived on the first of February 1849. On the evening of the thirty-first of January a gathering was held in the great hall at Manchester. Speeches were made and choruses were sung until midnight. When twelve o'clock sounded, the assembly broke out in loud and long-sustained cheers to welcome the dawn of the day which had at last brought Free Trade in corn. Free Trade in its turn had brought new causes for which to fight. Cobden never swerved from his maxim that he could only do one thing at a time; but his activity during the session of 1849 included in the same effort not only reduced armaments, reduced expenditure, and re-adjusted taxation, but the more delicate subject of international arbitration.

"*London, Jan.* 5, 1849. (*To G. Combe.*)—I hope you will not think there is any inconsistency in the strong declaration I made at the meeting, of the paramount importance of the question of Education, and my apparent present inactivity in the matter. Owing to the split in the Liberal party, caused by Baines, it would be impossible for me to make it the leading political subject at this moment. Time is absolutely necessary to ripen it, but in the interim there are other topics which will take the lead in spite of any efforts to prevent it, reduction of expenditure being the foremost; and all I can

1849.
ÆT. 45.

promise myself is that any influence I may derive now from my connexion with the latter or any other movement, shall at the fitting opportunity be all brought to bear in favour of National Education. To confess the truth, I can only do one thing at a time. Here am I now put in a prominent position upon the most complex of all public questions, the national finances, and next session I shall be perhaps more the object of attack, and my Budget more the subject of criticism, than the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his financial measures. For all this I am obliged to prepare myself by studying the dry details of official papers, and reading Hansard from 1815 to the present day, whilst at the same time I am in a daily treadmill of letter-writing, for every man having a crotchet upon finance, or a grievance however trifling, is inundating me with his correspondence. I can't help it, though I believe I am shortening my days by following strictly the rule, 'whatever thou doest, do with all thy heart.' You know that of old I have felt a strong sentiment upon the subject of warlike armaments and war. It is this moral sentiment, more than the £ *s. d.* view of the matter, which impels me to undertake the advocacy of a reduction of our forces. It was a kindred sentiment (more than the material view of the question) which actuated me on the Corn Law and Free Trade question. It would enable me to die happy if I could feel the satisfaction of having in some degree contributed to the partial disarmament of the world."

"*Feb.* 8. (*To G. Combe.*)—I hasten to reply to your kind inquiries about my Budget. In a day or two I intend to give notice of a motion declaratory of the expediency of reducing the expenditure to the amount of 1835. The terms of my resolution will

1849. Æt. 45.

be to reduce the expenditure '*with all practicable speed*.'[1] I am too practical a man of business to think that it can be done in one session. But I will raise the question of our financial system with a view to save ten millions, and that will arrest public interest in a way which no nibbling at details would do. In less than five years all that I propose, and a great deal more, will be accomplished.

"I say I am too practical to think that the reduction of ten millions can be made in a session, because the changes in our distant colonies will take time. But these changes ought to be set about at once. For instance, we have an army as large in Canada and the other North American Colonies as that of the United States. Yet under the *régime* of Free Trade, Canada is not a whit more ours than is the great Republic. To keep that force in the North American Colonies at the expense of the tax-payers of this country, is precisely the same drain upon our resources as if the Government of the United States could levy a contribution upon us for the pay and subsistence of its army. The same may be said of our army in Australia, New Zealand, etc.; and if we do not draw in our horns, this country, with all its wealth, energy, and resources, will sink under the weight of its extended empire."

"*April* 9. (*To G. Combe.*)—Did this subject ever come under your notice? I have lying before me a

[1] The motion was brought forward on February 26, and was to the effect that the net expenditure had risen by ten millions between 1835 and 1848; that the increase had been caused principally by defensive armaments; that it was not warranted, while the taxes required to meet it lessened the funds applicable to productive industry; and that therefore it was expedient to reduce the annual expenditure with all practicable speed to the amount of 1835. The division went against Cobden's motion by a majority of 197, only 78 going into the lobby with the mover.

1849.
ÆT. 45.

return of all the barracks in the United Kingdom, the date of their erection, their size, etc. It is to me one of the most discouraging and humiliating documents I am acquainted with. Almost every considerable town has its barracks. They have nearly all been erected since 1790, before which date they were hardly known, and were denounced with horror by such men as Chatham, Fox, etc. By far the most extensive establishments have been erected during the last twenty-five years. I speak of Great Britain. As for Ireland, it is studded over with barracks like a permanent encampment. I need not enlarge upon the direct moral evils of such places. One fact is enough: real property always falls in value in the vicinity of barracks. A prison or a cemetery is a preferable neighbour. But you will also see at a glance that this increase of barracks is the outward and visible sign of the increased discontent of the mass of the people, and the growing alarm of the governing classes. It argues great injustice on one side or ignorance on the other, perhaps both. The expense is too obvious to require comment. And where is this to end? Either we must change our system—give the people a voice in the government, and qualify the rising generation to exercise the rights of freemen,—or we shall follow the fate of the Continent, and end in a convulsion.

"You seem to be puzzled about my motion in favour of international arbitration. Perhaps you have mixed it up with other theories to which I am no party. My plan does not embrace the scheme of a congress of nations, or imply the belief in the millennium, or demand your homage to the principles of non-resistance. I simply propose that England should offer to enter into an agreement with other countries, France, for instance, binding them to

1849. Æt. 45. refer any dispute that may arise to arbitration. I do not mean to refer the matter to another sovereign power, but that each party should appoint plenipotentiaries in the form of commissioners, with a proviso for calling in arbitrators in case they cannot agree. In fact, I wish merely to bind them to do that before a war, which nations always do virtually after it. As for the argument that nations will not fulfil their treaties, that would apply to all international engagements. We have many precedents in favour of my plan. One advantage about it is that it could do no harm; for the worst that could happen would be a resort to the means which has hitherto been the only mode of settling national quarrels. Will you think again upon the subject, and tell me whether there is anything impracticable about it?

"I will support the Oath Abolition motion.[1] There ought to be no swearing in courts at all. But instead of oaths, the clerk at the table ought to read to every witness, before he gives his evidence, the clause of the Act of Parliament which imposes a penalty for false testimony."

"*London, June* 19. (*To G. Combe.*)—I am glad you are satisfied with the debate on my arbitration motion.[2] I might have taken higher ground in my argument with more justice to the subject, and with more effect upon the minds of my *readers*, but I had to deal with an audience determined to sneer down the motion as Utopian. Ever since the beginning of the

[1] Lord John Russell's resolution, on which a Bill was afterwards founded, for the removal of Jewish disabilities. The Bill passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords.

[2] On June 12, Cobden moved an Address to Her Majesty, praying that foreign powers might be invited to concur in treaties, binding the parties to refer matters in dispute to arbitration. Lord Palmerston moved the previous question. There was a rather languid debate, and the previous question was carried by 176 to 79.

session, I had to run the gauntlet of the small wits of the House, who amused themselves at my expense, and tittered at the very word, arbitration. These men would have been as eager as any Quaker to profess a desire for peace, but were prepared to pooh-pooh as utterly visionary any plan for trying to put down the cherished institution of war. It was to meet these people on what they considered their strong ground that I dwelt upon the practical views of my scheme, and it was some satisfaction to me to see nearly half of my audience leave the House without voting, and to draw from Lord Palmerston a speech full of admissions, which ended by an amendment avowedly framed to escape a direct negation of my motion. The more I have reflected upon the subject, the more I am satisfied that I am right at the right time. Next session I will repeat my proposition, and I will also bring the House to a division upon another and kindred motion, for negotiating with foreign countries, for stopping any further increase of armaments, and, if possible, for agreeing to a gradual disarmament. These motions go naturally together. They are called for by the spirit of the age and the necessities of the finances of all the European states.

1849. ÆT. 45.

"I agree with you in thinking that the French have displayed a want of conscientiousness and an excess of self-esteem in their treatment of the Roman people. I do not remember in all history a more flagitious violation of justice than the French expedition and attack on Rome. The Republic of France within a year of its own existence putting down a Republic in a neighbouring country at the point of the bayonet—a Republic born of the Parisian barricades too, — is a monstrous outrage upon decency and common sense. There is a certain re-

1849. Æt. 45. tribution for these sins against the moral laws. They carry in them the seeds of their own punishment. When the French army is in occupation of Rome, then will begin the difficulty of the situation."

When the session was over, Cobden with indefatigable zeal pushed his propagandism in new fields. Though not a member, he accompanied his friends of the Peace Society to the Peace Congress, which was this year held in Paris.

"*Paris, Aug.* 19. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—I have had my usual fate in passing the channel. Scarcely were we clear of the harbour at Newhaven, when I was laid on my beam-ends, and for six hours I never moved hand or foot. It was rather cold, and rained a little, so that I was obliged to be covered over with a couple of counterpanes, and there I lay like a mummy till unrolled in the harbour of Dieppe, at about half-past six o'clock. It makes my flesh creep to think of it. I tried to get a bed at the hotel where we stopped, but it was full, and I was therefore obliged to put up with the discomfort and bad odours of a second-rate place. The following morning at half-past eleven I started for Paris by railroad, which goes through Rouen and along the valley of the Seine, and is decidedly the most picturesque scene of all the railroads I have traversed. We reached Paris at half-past four, and I am very comfortably installed at this hotel along with the Peace Committee. There is every prospect of a large attendance at the Congress, but we shall not shine so brightly as I could wish in French names. Our friends had calculated upon the attraction of Lamartine's name, but they are disappointed. From all accounts he appears to be prostrated in mind, body, and estate. We have chosen Victor Hugo for chairman. He stands well socially, and his

1849. ÆT. 45.

name is known, and he is one of the few first-rate men to be had. To my great surprise I find that Horace Say, after signing the circulars inviting the Congress, has gone off to Switzerland with his family. I thought him the most trustworthy man in France. Bastiat is gone to Brussels, but I am assured he will come back to the Congress. The good men who have come here from England to make the arrangements are sadly put out in their calculations of French support, by having taken too much to heart all the professions, promises, bows, and compliments, which they met with on their first arrival here. They are now taking such demonstrations at their just value. Notwithstanding, however, all drawbacks, the Congress will do much good. We shall pass a resolution condemnatory of war loans, which will serve hereafter as a basis for some demonstrations against the attempt to find money for Russia in the city. I have not yet seen the Hogarths, or anybody I know. Yesterday I spent in looking about Paris. Paris externally looks the same as ever; but I fancy I see a haggard, careworn expression in the people's faces, which bespeaks past suffering and apprehension for the future. This may be imagination, but I think I see a great many sunken eyes and clenched lips amongst all classes. There have been terrible suffering and losses, and nobody has escaped it from the king to the cabman."

"*Paris, Aug.* 25. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—You will think me negligent, but if you saw how I have been placed here for the last three days you would excuse me. I am at the headquarters of the Committee of Congress, and my bedroom (foolishly enough, on my part) is off the common sitting-room, and morning, noon, and night I have been in the *mêlée*. Besides, the French public persists in regarding me as a very

1849. Æt. 45.

important personage, and I have been more and more beset every day with visitors. But now the sittings of the Congress are over, and I am able to say that it has proved very successful; each day more and more auditors of a highly-respectable class, and the last day thousands are said to have gone away without being able to enter. Everybody is astonished that upon such a subject, and at this hot season of the year, in Paris, too, a room holding 2000 persons should be crowded for three days running, and upon the same subject. However, so it is. Everything is sure to succeed that has a good principle in it. All our good Quaker friends are in capital spirits. There can be no doubt that our meetings will have done good. Everybody has been talking about them during the week, and the subject of peace has for the first time had its hearing, even in France. My first speech, although there is really little in it, produced a famous effect in the audience and has been almost universally lauded in the papers. It ought to have been well received, for it cost me a good deal of time with the aid of Bastiat to write and prepare to read it. My good friend Bastiat has been two mornings with me in my room, translating and teaching, before eight o'clock. The Government has shown a very friendly disposition towards us. We have had all the public buildings and monuments thrown open to us. On Monday the Versailles water-works and the water-works at St. Cloud are to be set to play for the special gratification of the members of the Congress. These works play but four times a year on Sundays, and the Monday has been chosen on this occasion, in delicate compliment to the religious feeling of the English. To-night we are all invited, men and women, to De Tocqueville's, the French Foreign Minister. On Tuesday the

deputation returns, and the members ought to be highly delighted with their visit." 1849. Æt. 45.

"*Paris, Aug.* 28. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—After writing to you on Sunday I found that the post did not leave that evening, and that therefore my letter to you would not probably reach you till Wednesday. On Monday I dined with De Tocqueville with a small party. Yesterday (Monday) we had our excursion to Versailles in a special train at nine o'clock in the morning; about 700 were in the party. We were shown freely over the palace, and then we went to a large hall called the Tennis Court,[1] in which luncheon was provided. After it was over, I was moved into the chair, and we went through the interesting little ceremony of presenting to each of our American friends a copy of the New Testament in French, as a tribute of our admiration for their zeal in coming so far to attend the Congress. Then we returned to the grounds of the palace, and saw the exhibition of the water-works, which was really a splendid sight. A vast crowd of French people was there, and they were exceedingly good-humoured and polite, but they seemed to be unable to suppress their smiles at the Quakeresses' bonnets. From Versailles the train carried the party to St. Cloud to see the exhibition of the water-works there at night illuminated."

While Cobden was busied in this way, Mr. Bright had gone to study the Irish Question on the spot. He was a month in the country, and was accompanied for part of the time by one of the Commissioners of the Board of Works. His inquiries were extensive

[1] The famous scene of one of the most memorable incidents of the first stage in the French Revolution. Strange contrast between the mad agitation and furious resolve of the Oath of the Tennis Court, and this pacific presentation of New Testaments to the American Quakers!

1849. Æt. 45. and incessant, and what he had said about Irish affairs in some of his speeches secured for him particular attention on every side. Mr. Bright speedily put his finger upon the root of the mischief. What was universally demanded, he said, was security for improvements. Want of this was the cause of perpetual war between landlord and tenant. In order to remove the evil, he agreed with the leading members of the practical party in Ireland, in certain contingencies to introduce a Bill which they were preparing for assuring to the tenant the value of his improvements. This is Cobden's reply:—

"*London, Oct.* 1. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I was glad to receive your letter, and much interested in the details of your visit to Ireland. Be assured you have done the right thing in going there. It is a duty that ought to be similarly fulfilled by all of us.

"I was staying for a day or two after the receipt of your letter with a friend in Sussex (Mr. Sharpe), whose son is the nominal proprietor through his mother of the late Sir Wm. Brabazon's estate in Mayo. Both father and son were strong in praise of the Encumbered Estates Act, under which the Brabazon property, hopelessly encumbered and in Chancery, is to be disposed of.

"The father, who is a Sussex proprietor, a liberal man, and a somewhat *enragé* political economist, hopes this Irish measure will be a stepping-stone for setting real estate at greater liberty in England. For myself I can't help thinking that everything has got to be done for Ireland. Hitherto the sole reliance has been on bayonets and *patching*. The feudal system presses upon that country in a way which, as a rule, only foreigners can understand, for we have an ingrained feudal spirit in our English character. I never spoke to a French or Italian economist who

1849.
ÆT. 45.

did not at once put his finger on the fact, that great masses of landed property were held by the descendants of a conquering race who were living abroad, and thus in a double manner perpetuating the remembrance of conquest and oppression, whilst the natives were at the same time precluded from possessing themselves of landed property and thus becoming interested in the peace of the country. This was always pointed out to me as the prime obstacle to improvement. How we are to get out of this dilemma with the present House of Commons, and our representative system as it is, is the problem. For we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that our law, or rather custom, of primogeniture, has its roots in the prejudices of the upper portion of the middle class as well as in the privileges of the aristocracy. The snobbishness of the moneyed classes in the great seats of commerce and manufactures is a fearful obstacle to any effectual change of the system.

"It was only at the price of ten millions of money, and hundreds of thousands of famished victims, that we succeeded in passing our Encumbered Estates Bill. Our only consolation is that as we descend in the ranks of the middle class, and approach the more intelligent of the working people, the feudal prejudice diminishes; and this brings us to our only hope for progress, whether in this question or the others on which we feel interested, namely, an increase in the popular element in the House of Commons. I have no fear that we can effect this change gradually, and certainly if we can induce our friends to work with perseverance. I do not object to Walmsley's proceedings—in fact I am grateful to anybody that does anything but stagnate. I subscribed my mite to his association and have cheered him on. He has rendered this good service, at least, that

1849. Æt. 45.

he has brought middle-class people and Chartists together without setting them by the ears, and although he has rather shocked some moderate Liberals by his broad doctrines, he has carried others unconsciously with him. But this good being done, I have not disguised from him that mere public demonstrations without an organized system of working will do nothing towards effecting a change in the representation. That can only be done by local exertions in the registration courts, and above all by the forty shilling votes in the counties.

"Whilst at Eastbourne we talked this matter over with Fox, who was there, and we agreed that the County qualification movement ought to be encouraged as a means of extending the suffrage, without restricting its object to any particular scheme of organic or practical reforms. *The forty shilling freehold movement ought to be supported solely on the principle of extending the suffrage*—and it is a scheme which involves so many moral and social benefits that it will be, I feel convinced, sustained by a great number of men of moral weight throughout the country who would not work with us for any large scheme of sudden organic change; and these men, once enlisted with us, would go on afterwards for all that we desire.

"I wrote to Taylor asking him some questions: first, whether he thought a delegate meeting of all those already engaged or willing to embark in the forty shilling movement ought to be called. Second, whether he was receiving many letters upon the subject indicating a growing interest in the subject; whether he was invited to go to meetings, and whether he could give me any statistics of the existing number of members, etc. Third, whether he thought a periodical to be called *The Freeholder*,

1849.
ÆT. 45.

giving a condensed report of all proceedings and directions about registration, etc., should be published by a Union of the Societies. Here is his answer. Making all deductions for his enthusiasm, it is clear there is life in his movement. If taken up zealously by all of us, I do believe that the present number of electors could be doubled in less than seven years, and, between ourselves, such a constituency would give you at the present moment a more reliable support for thorough practical reforms than universal suffrage. May I predict that if we should succeed to the extent above named, there would not be wanting shrewd members of the Tory aristocracy who would be found advocating universal suffrage, to take their chance in an appeal to the ignorance and vice of the country against the opinions of the teetotallers, nonconformist and rational Radicals, who would constitute nine-tenths of our phalanx of forty shilling freeholders. I have sent you Taylor's letters. I feel much inclined, indeed I may say I am almost resolved, to go to Birmingham at the end of this month or the beginning of next to a delegate meeting. Tell me what you and Wilson think. Pray show him the letters. When I alluded to a circular to be called *The Freeholder*, I meant a monthly publication as a beginning, to give information and directions about qualifying, registering, etc., and to record the names and proceedings of all societies. But such a publication might grow into a powerful exponent of the laws of real property, and make people familiar with things which are now Hebrew and Greek to them.

"I have bored you all so much about this forty shilling freehold scheme, that you seem to have fallen naturally into the idea that I cherish it to the exclusion of a broad and specific plan of reform. It

1849. ÆT. 45.

is not so. I want it as a means to all that we require, and upon my conscience it is, I believe, the only stepping-stone to any material change. The citadel of privilege in this country is so terribly strong, owing to the concentrated masses of property in the hands of the comparatively few, that we cannot hope to assail it with success unless with the help of the propertied classes in the middle ranks of society, and by raising up a portion of the working-class to become members of a propertied order; and I know no other mode of enlisting such co-operation but that which I have suggested. . . ."

"*Nov.* 4. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—If you know Mr. Kay's address, don't forget to impress upon him the importance of separating the question of land tenure from that of education in his forthcoming book. Nothing is more wanted than a good treatise on the former subject. The fate of empires, and the fortunes of their peoples, depend upon the condition of the proprietorship of land to an extent which is not at all understood in this country. We are a servile, aristocracy-loving, lord-ridden people, who regard the land with as much reverence as we still do the peerage and baronetage. Not only have not nineteen-twentieths of us any share in the soil, but we have not presumed to think that we are worthy to possess a few acres of mother earth. The politicians who would propose to break up the estates of this country into smaller properties, will be looked upon as revolutionary democrats aiming at nothing less than the establishment of a Republic upon the ruin of Queen and Lords.

"The only way of approaching this question with advantage at the present moment is through an economical argument. And Mr. Kay may do himself credit by his treatment of the subject, provided

1849.
ÆT. 45.

he gives us plenty of well-considered facts throwing light upon the comparative condition of the people in countries where land is subdivided, and where it is held in great masses. In my opinion the high moral and social condition of the inhabitants of mountainous countries such as the Swiss, the Biscayans, etc., etc., is to be greatly attributed to the fact that as a rule the land in hilly countries is always more subdivided; in fact, that the face of nature is almost an insuperable bar to the acquisition of large continuous sweeps of landed property.

"*P.S.*—Don't you think that *A History of Chartism*, from the framing of the Charter down to the present time, with a temperate but truthful narrative of the doings of the leaders, would be an interesting and useful work? Somerville is the man to do it if he had access to a complete file of the *Northern Star*. The working-class are just now in the mood for reviewing with advantage the bombastic sayings and abortive doings of Feargus and his lieutenants. The attempted revival of the Chartist agitation under the old leadership makes this an appropriate time for such a retrospect.

"The difficulty with Somerville would be to condense sufficiently his narrative—this would not be easy even with one who had a style less flowing and less imagination than he—for the temptation to quote largely from the speeches and letters of the big Chartist Bobadil would be almost irresistible. Would not such a work be interesting in a series of letters or articles in the *Examiner*, to be afterwards printed in a volume? It would be certain to elicit a howl from the knaves who were subjected to the ordeal of the pillory, and this would be useful in attracting attention to the book."

"*December* 6. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—You must get

1849. Captain Mundy's edition of *Brooke's Diary*. It was published originally by Captain Keppell, and some horrid passages were omitted by the discretion of his friends; but a new edition by Captain Mundy was published while Brooke was afterwards at home, and those parts were restored. See the first vol., p. 311, etc., and p. 325. There are details of bloodshed and executions which, if they had appeared in the first volume, would have checked the sentimental mania which gave Brooke all his powers of evil.

Æt. 45.

"The above is information which I have from a friend who knows all about the affair from the beginning, and it may be relied on. I have not the book. I fear Gurney will be an obstacle to anything being done. I sometimes doubt whether his obstructiveness at every step does not more than counteract any advantage derived by the Society from the influence of his name. I don't understand men of the world when they tell us we must rely upon the influence of Christian principles, and boggle at every proposal to enforce them in the current proceedings of Governments and societies. If a monk held such language in his cell and invited us to rely upon fasts and flagellations, I could see some consistency in it. But when such sentiments come from a millionaire in Lombard Street, they pass my comprehension. If I wished to do as little as possible, I should wish to be able to convince myself that I was in the path of duty when I folded my arms and exhorted people to pray for the triumph of Christian principles. St. Paul did something more than that, and so did George Fox. See the *Manchester Examiner* of Saturday next, for an article which I have sent upon the Borneo affair. The paper will be forwarded to you. I shall be at Leeds and Sheffield the week after next, and will allude to

1849.
ÆT. 45.

the subject if I can. It shocks me to think what fiendish atrocities may be committed by English arms without rousing any conscientious resistance at home, provided they be only far enough off, and the victims too feeble to trouble us with their remonstrances or groans. We as a nation have an awful retribution in store for us if Heaven strike a just reckoning, as I believe it does, for wicked deeds even in this world. There must be a public and solemn protest against this wholesale massacre. The Peace Society and the Aborigines Society are shams if such deeds go unrebuked. We cannot go before the world with clean hands on any other question if we are silent spectators of such atrocities."[1]

"*Dec.* 8. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—You seem to have fallen into the idea that I am looking to the freehold plan as a substitute for a thorough reform. I look to it as a means to do something, and not an end. I wish to abate the power of the aristocracy in their strongholds. Our enemy is as subtle as powerful, and I fear some of us have not duly weighed the difficulties of our task. The aristocracy are afraid of nothing but systematic organization and step-by-step progress. They know that the only advantage we of the stirring class have over them is in habits of persevering labour. They fear nothing but the application of these qualities to the business of political agitation. I prize the privilege of our platforms, and the power of public discussion and denunciation as much as anybody; but public meetings for Parliamentary Reform which do not tend to systematic work (as was not the case in the League), will be viewed by the aristocracy with complacency as the harmless blowing off of the steam.

[1] Borneo affairs were not fully discussed in Parliament until 1851, when Cobden supported Hume's motion for inquiry.

1849. Æt. 45.

"With this impression, I have urged upon Walmsley an organization for bringing the registers of the boroughs under the control of men of his way of thinking, men favourable to the four points. This, coupled with the county qualification movement, which is urged on by men of the same party, would in two or three years, if resolutely worked, place us in a respectable position in the House.

"You seem to speak as if I were the obstacle to the movement being carried out in Manchester last year. My own fear was lest the public elsewhere should be deceived as to what we should do for them in Manchester, for I felt that we had not the materials there to renew such an agitation as was proposed. It is not in human nature that, after the exhaustion of one great effort, the same men should begin another of an equally arduous character. I am also of opinion that we have not the same elements in Lancashire for a Democratic Reform movement, as we had for Free Trade. To me the most discouraging fact in our political state is the condition of the Lancashire boroughs, where, with the exception of Manchester, nearly all the municipalities are in the hands of the stupidest Tories in England; and where we can hardly see our way for an equal half-share of Liberal representation in Parliament. We have the labour of Hercules in hand to abate the power of the aristocracy and their allies, the snobs of the towns. I have faith in nothing but slow and heavy toil, and I shall lose all hope if we cannot see with toleration, and a desire to encourage, every effort that aims at curtailing the power and privileges of the common enemy."

Cobden was never so immersed in political projects as to forget how much of the vital work of social improvement lies entirely away from the field

of politics. While he was corresponding with Mr. Bright about economic and parliamentary reform, and with George Combe about education, he did not lose sight of a third cause which seemed to him, as it has always done to Mr. Bright also, not any less important to the national welfare than either of the other two. The letter which follows was written to Mr. Livesey, a zealous advocate for the promotion of Temperance:— 1849. ÆT. 45.

"*London, Oct.* 10.—Your letter has given me very great pleasure. It has often been a matter of sincere regret to me that I have not had the pleasure since my return to England of shaking hands with you. I have taken up my abode permanently here, for being obliged to be six months in London, and finding it intolerable to be so long separated from my family, I had no alternative but to make choice of one abode, or to have two removals of my household every year, which is both unpleasant and expensive. As I had no business ties in Manchester, I was tempted by the climate to leave my esteemed friends and neighbours to settle here, where I shall never form the sterling friendships that I possessed in Lancashire. The damp and rigorous climate of South Lancashire with its clay soil, never agreed with my constitution, which requires a more genial temperature and a sandy dry soil, such as I was used to in my early days in Sussex. My abode is near the Great Western Station, Paddington, the highest part, as well as the driest, of the metropolis.

"You are right in the path of usefulness you have chalked out for yourself; the temperance cause really lies at the root of all social and political progression in this country. The English people are, in many respects, the most reliable of all earthly

1849. Æt. 45.

beings. I am not one who likes to laud the Anglo-Saxon race as being superior to all others in every quality; for when we remember that we owe our religion to Asiatics, our literature, architecture, and fine arts greatly to the Greeks, our numeral signs to the Arabs, our civilization to the inhabitants of Italy, and much of our physical science and mechanical inventions to the Germans; when we recollect these things it ought to make us moderate in our exclusive pretensions. But give me a sober Englishman, possessing the truthfulness common to his country, and the energy so peculiarly his own, and I will match him for being capable of equalling any other man in the everyday struggles of life. He has a self-depending and self-governing instinct which carries him triumphantly through all difficulties and dangers. But in travelling through all civilized countries, I have often been struck with the superiority that foreigners enjoy over us from their greater sobriety, which imparts to them higher advantages of civilization, even when they are really far behind us in the average of education and in political institutions. The energy natural to the English race degenerates to savage brutality under the influence of habitual drunkenness; and one of the worst effects of intemperate habits is to destroy that self-respect which lies at the bottom of all virtuous ambition. It is here that I have often been struck with the inferiority of our working people, at least that portion of them which habitually indulges in drunkenness, happily every year diminishing in number. They want the decent self-possession and courteous manners which you find among more sober nations. If you could convert us into a nation of water-drinkers, I see no reason why, in addition to our being the most energetic, we

1849.
ÆT. 45.

should not be the most polished people, for we are inferior to none in the inherent qualities of the gentleman, truthfulness and benevolence. With these sentiments, I need not say how much I reverence your efforts in the cause of teetotalism, and how gratified I was to find that my note (written privately, by the way, to Mr. Cassell) should have afforded you any satisfaction. I am a living tribute to the soundness of your principles. With a delicate frame and nervous temperament, I have been enabled, by temperance, to do the work of a strong man. But it has only been by more and more temperance. In my early days I used sometimes to join with others in a glass of spirit and water, and beer was my everyday drink. I soon found that spirits would not do, and for twenty years I have not taken a glass unless as a medicine. Then port and sherry became almost as incompatible with my mental exertions, and for many years I have not touched those wines excepting for form's sake in after-dinner society. Latterly, when dining out, I find it necessary to mix water even with champagne. At my own table I never have anything but water when dining with my family, and we have not a beer-barrel in the house. For some years we have stipulated with all our servants to drink water, and we allow them extra wages to show that we do not wish to treat them worse than our neighbours. All my children will, I hope, be teetotallers. So you see that without beginning upon principle, I have been brought to your beverage solely by a nice observance of what is necessary to enable me to surmount an average mental labour of at least twelve hours a day. I need not add that it would be no sacrifice to me to join your ranks by taking the pledge. On the contrary, it would be a satisfaction to me to

1849. Æt. 45.

know that from this moment I should never taste fermented drink again. Shall I confess it? My only restraining feeling would be that it would compel a singularity of habits in social life. Not that this would, I trust, be an insurmountable obstacle, if paramount motives of usefulness urged me to the step."

In connexion with the same subject, he wrote to Mr. Ashworth, mildly protesting against a political banquet, and pointing out the superior courage of the Americans in their way of making war on this particular temptation to excessive self-indulgence:—

"*Dec.* 13.—I am not quite sure that dinner-parties are the best tactics for our party to fall into in Manchester. Our strength lies with the shopocracy, and I think the members for Manchester are turning their backs upon the main army of reformers when they leave the Free Trade Hall for a meeting of any kind in a smaller room. Public dinners are good for our opponents, but I have more faith in teetotalism than bumper glasses, so far as the interests of the democracy are concerned. The moral force of the masses lies in the temperance movement, and I confess I have no faith in anything apart from that movement for the elevation of the working class. We do not sufficiently estimate the amount of crime, vice, poverty, ignorance, and destitution, which springs from the drinking habits of the people. The Americans have a clearer perception of the evils of drunkenness upon the political and material prospects of the people, and their leading men set an example of temperance on all public occasions. I lately read an account of a great political meeting in New Hampshire, at which Daniel Webster presided, when fifteen hundred persons sat down to dinner, at which not a drop of wine, spirits, or beer was drunk. Depend on it, they were more than a

match for four times their number of wine-bibbers. You will wonder why I preach this homily to *you*. But it is apropos of the Corn Exchange dinner. . . . Sure am I that when the election day comes, the teetotallers will be found the best workers in the ranks of the Liberals, whilst the drinkers will be the only hope of the Tories." 1849. ÆT. 45.

"I remember that one year (1843)," Cobden once wrote to Combe, by way of illustrating this matter, "Bright, Colonel Thompson, and I invaded Scotland and made a tour of the kingdom, separating as we entered and reuniting at Stirling on the completion of our work. There, after a large public meeting, we adjourned to our hotel, where we were joined by a number of bailies and other leading men, who sat with us, to our great discomfort (for we needed our beds), till one o'clock in the morning, drinking whisky-toddy out of glasses which they filled from tumblers with little ladles, and I remember that a certain sleight-of-hand in this operation, acquired, I suppose, by long practice, amused us Southrons a good deal. As we three Englishmen took nothing but tea, it drew attention to our total abstinence principles, which were then more rare than at present. We compared notes with one another in the hearing of the bailies, and found that in our tour in Scotland not a shilling had been paid by us for spirits, beer, or wine." Their companions were at first disposed to eye them rather contemptuously, but after hearing them recount the work they had gone through, the number of meetings they had attended, very often two in one day, the bailies were constrained to admit, as they placed their ladles finally in the emptied tumblers, that water-drinking was not incompatible with indomitable energy and long perseverance in exhausting labour.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DON PACIFICO DEBATE—THE PAPAL AGGRESSION —CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. BRIGHT ON REFORM—KOSSUTH

1850. Æt. 46.

THE year 1850 has an important place in the history of Cobden's principles, because it is the date of a certain discussion in Parliament which marked the triumph for the rest of his life, though for no longer, of the school which was inveterately antagonistic to his whole scheme of national policy. The famous Don Pacifico debate was the turning-point in the career of Lord Palmerston, and it was the first clear signal of the repulse of Cobden's cherished doctrine for twenty years to come.

Lord Palmerston had been at the Foreign Office for four years. During that time he had been incessantly active in the affairs of half the countries of Europe. That *taquinerie* of which Bastiat complained so bitterly to Cobden was at its height. Nothing like it was ever seen in our politics before or since. He had brought England to the brink of war with France in connexion with the Spanish Marriages. He had sent the fleet to the Tagus to prevent the people of Portugal from settling their internal affairs in their own way. He had plunged into the thick of the dangerous European complications connected with the civil war among the Swiss Cantons. An

1850.
ÆT. 46.

English agent had been despatched on a roving commission to the states south of the Alps, to teach politics, as Mr. Disraeli said, to the country where Machiavelli was born. When war broke out between the King of Naples and his subjects in Sicily, Lord Palmerston's emissary rode the whirlwind and tried to guide the storm. The bustling delirium came to a climax when the Foreign Secretary told his ambassador at Madrid to give a severe lecture to the Spanish Government for failing to respect the opinions and sentiments of their country. With a laudable sense of their own dignity, the Spanish Government sent Lord Palmerston's despatch back, and ordered the British Minister to leave the country in eight-and-forty hours. Lord Palmerston sincerely believed that he was carrying out those vague and much-disputed objects, which go by the name of the Principles of Mr. Canning. Nor has any one ever denied that in all this untiring restlessness he was moved by an honest interest in good government, or by a vigorous resolution that his country should play a prominent and worthy part in settling the difficulties of Europe. The conception had about it a generous and taking air. It was magnificent, but unluckily there was no sense in it. For the unreflecting portion of mankind the spectacle of energy on a large scale has always irresistible attractions; vigour becomes an end in itself and an object of admiration for its own sake. Now that the contemporary mists have cleared away, everybody can see that Lord Palmerston's vigour at this epoch was futile in its ultimate results to others, and in its immediate circumstances full of the gravest danger to ourselves. It kept us constantly on the edge of war, it involved waste of our resources, and it diverted attention from the long list of

1850. improvements that were so sorely needed within our own gates.

ÆT. 46.

With what feeling Cobden watched these doings, we may imagine. They roused him to renewed assaults upon the public opinion which tolerated or abetted them. Throughout the autumn of 1849 he and his friends pursued their operations with all their usual zeal and confidence. He made speeches at Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, and others of the northern towns, saying over again with new illustrations what he had been saying during the previous session about retrenchment, readjusted taxation, the necessity of lessened armaments, the impolicy of our colonial relations. People listened, were keenly interested, and in the course of years the seed which Cobden was sowing germinated and bore good fruit. But there were for the moment certain transactions in Eastern Europe which stirred popular passion in England to the depths, and prepared the way for those unfortunate events which five years later seemed to dash the whole fabric of Cobden's hopes down to the ground.

The Hungarian War of Independence was one of the most remarkable incidents in the revolutionary outburst of 1848, as its suppression was one of the most important episodes in the absolutist reaction which so speedily followed. The Czar of Russia came to the aid of the Emperor of Austria; after a brave resistance the Hungarian forces were forced to surrender to the Russian general; while Kossuth and others of the patriotic leaders crossed the frontier into the Turkish provinces, and placed themselves under the protection of the Ottoman Porte. The two northern powers demanded that the refugees should be handed over by the Turkish Government, and for some time Europe looked with intense

1850.
Æt. 46.

excitement upon the diplomatic struggle. Cobden shared to the full the vehement indignation with which his countrymen had watched these evil transactions. At the same time he did not fail to see the danger of this just sympathy with a good cause turning into an irresistible cry for armed intervention on behalf of Hungarian Independence and its champions. It must be owned that Cobden's position was a very delicate one. It seems to the present writer to be impossible to state the principle of non-intervention in rational and statesmanlike terms, if it is under all circumstances, and without any qualification or limit, to preclude an armed protest against intervention by other foreign powers. There may happen to be good reasons why we should on a given occasion passively watch a foreign Government interfering by violence in the affairs of another country. Our own Government may have its hands full; or it may have no military means of intervening to good purpose; or its intervention might in the long-run do more harm than good to the objects of its solicitude. But there can be no general prohibitory rule. Where, as here, a military despot interfered to crush the men of another country while struggling for their national rights, no principle can make it wrong for a free nation to interfere by force against him. It can only be a question of expediency and prudence.

Of course so obvious a distinction was not unperceived by Cobden, and he had a sufficiently strong case without straining the general principle further than it can legitimately be made to go. At a meeting which was held at the London Tavern to protest against the Russian invasion of Hungary, he set forth in definite language his view of the nature and the duty of a right intervention. By a singular chance, Lord Palmerston forgot to meddle, even by a lecture,

1751 THE LIBRARY
COLBY JUNIOR COLLEGE
NEW LONDON, N. H

1850. Æt. 46.

in the one case at this date where he might possibly have meddled to good effect. Russia, said Cobden, was allowed to march her armies across the territory of Turkey, through Wallachia and Moldavia, to strike a death-blow at the heart of Hungary, and yet no protest was recorded by our Government against that act. It was his deliberate conviction, as it was that of the most illustrious men who were engaged in the Hungarian struggle, that if Lord Palmerston had made a simple verbal protest in energetic terms, Russia would never have invaded Hungary. "It is well known," he said, "that the Ministers of the Czar almost went down on their knees to beg and entreat him not to embark in a struggle between Austria and Hungary. Our protest would immediately have been backed by the Ministry of the Czar if it had been made; and I believe it would have prevented that most atrocious outrage upon the rights and liberties of a constitutional country." This protest he would have made, but he would have resisted any attempt to fight the battle of Hungary on the banks of the Danube or the Theiss.

In other words he would have relied upon opinion. He was too practical to dream that regard for purely moral opinion could be trusted to check the overbearing impulse of powerful selfish interests. Wars, however, constantly arise not from the irreconcilable clashing of great interests of this kind, but from mismanaged trifles. This was what he had maintained in his argument for arbitration. The grave and unavoidable occasions for war, he said, are few. In the ordinary dealings of nations with one another, where a difference arises, it is about something where external opinion might easily be made to carry decisive weight. In the undecided state of the Czar's mind as to the invasion of Hungary, a vigorous expression

1850.
ÆT. 46.

of English opinion might and probably would have made all the difference. However that might be, it is the duty of the more highly civilized powers to lose no opportunity of shaping and strengthening the common opinion of Europe against both intervention of nations in one another's affairs, and against war for the first resort instead of the very last, as the means of settling international differences.

At this time Cobden warmly took up what seemed a most effective way of checking war and the preparations for war on the part of the two Powers whose tyrannical action had inflamed the resentment of his countrymen. With singular fire he entered on a crusade against the practice of lending, first to Austria and then to Russia, the great sums of money which were under various disguises and pretexts in effect borrowed to repay the cost of the late oppressive war. In October he delivered a powerful speech against the Austrian loan of seven millions. In the following January he convened a meeting at which he denounced with still more unsparing invective the loan of five and a half millions which was asked for by Russia. He insisted that the investment was unsound; that the funding system is injurious to mankind and unjust in principle; that the exportation of capital to be destroyed and lost in the bottomless abyss of foreign wars is contrary to the principles of political economy. What paradox could be more flagrant, he asked, than for a citizen to lend money to be the means of military preparations on the part of a foreign Power, when he knew, or ought to have known, that these very preparations for which he was providing would in their turn impose upon himself and the other taxpayers of his own country the burden of counter-preparations to meet them? What man with the most rudimentary

1850. Æt. 46.

sense of public duty could pretend that it was no affair of his to what use his money was put, so long as his interest was high and his security adequate? What was this money wanted for? Austria, with her barbarous consort, had been engaged in a cruel and remorseless war, and now she came, stretching forth her blood-stained hand to honest Dutchmen and Englishmen, and asking them to furnish the force of this hateful devastation. Not only was such a system a waste of national wealth, an anticipation of income, a destruction of capital, the imposition of a heavy and profitless burden on future generations: besides all this, it was a direct connivance at acts and a policy which the very men who were thus asked to lend their money to support it, professed to dislike and condemn, and had good reason for disliking and condemning. This system of foreign loans for war-like purposes, Cobden argued, by which England, Holland, Germany, and France are invited to pay for the arms, clothing, and food of the belligerents, is a system calculated to perpetuate the horrors of war. Those, moreover, who lend money for such purposes are destitute of any of those excuses by which men justify resort to the sword. They cannot plead patriotism, self-defence, or even anger, or the lust of military glory. They sit down coolly to calculate the chances to themselves of profit or loss in a game in which the lives of human beings are at stake. They have not even the savage and brutal gratification which the old pagans had, after they had paid for a seat in the amphitheatre, of witnessing the bloody combats of gladiators in the circus.[1]

It is impossible not to admire the courage, the sound sense, and the elevation, with which Cobden thus strove to diffuse the notion of moral responsi-

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 189.

1850.
ÆT. 46.

bility in connexion with the use of capital. Such a doctrine was a novelty even in the pulpit, and much more of a novelty on the platform. The press, which never goes before public opinion in such things and usually lags a little way behind, attacked him with its rudest weapons. The City resented the intrusion of the irrelevancies of right and wrong into the region of scrip, premium, and speculative percentage. Even some of his own friends asked him why, on their common principles of Free Trade, he could not let them lend their money in the dearest market and borrow in the cheapest; why there was not to be Free Trade in money as in everything else.[1] Few reformers find the path easy, but for none is it so hard as for him who introduces a new morality. Cobden could not flinch, because he was far-sighted enough to perceive that the destination of capital becomes more vitally important in proportion as society becomes more democratic. Germany is an instance before our eyes at this moment how, with modern populations, the destruction of capital in military enterprises breeds Socialism. As population increases, so does the necessity increase of wisely husbanding the resources on which it depends for subsistence. As political power now finds its way from the few to the masses, so much the more urgent is it that they should be taught to

[1] "I was told that a man had a right to lend his money without inquiring what it was wanted for. But if he knew it was wanted for a vile purpose had he a right of so lending it? I put this question to a City man:—'Somebody asks you to lend money to build houses with, and you know it is wanted for the purpose of building infamous houses: would you be justified in lending the money?' He replied, 'I would.' I rejoined, 'Then I am not going to argue with you—you are a man for the police magistrate to look after; for if you would lend money to build infamous houses, you would very likely keep one yourself, if you could get ten per cent by it.'"—*Speeches*, ii. 418.

1850. see how detrimental war is to them, not merely because it destroys human life, which after all is cheap, but because it plays havoc with the material instruments which raise or maintain that no less momentous object, the habit and standard of living.

ÆT. 46.

Cobden's urgent feeling about war was not in any degree sentimental; it arose from a truly philosophic view of the peculiar requirements which the changing forces and condition of modern society had brought with them. He opposed war, because war and the preparation for it consumed the resources which were required for the improvement of the temporal condition of the population. Sir Robert Peel had anticipated him in pressing upon Parliament the danger to European order arising from military expenditure. Heavy military expenditure, he said, meant heavy taxation, and heavy taxation meant discontent and revolution. That wise statesman had courageously repudiated the old maxim, *Bellum para si pacem velis.* A maxim that admits of more contradiction, he said, or one that should be received with greater reserve, never fell from the lips of man. What is always still more important, Peel was not afraid to say that it is impossible to secure a country against all conceivable risks. If in time of peace you insist on having all the colonial garrisons up to the standard of complete efficiency, and if every fortification is to be kept in a state of perfect repair, then no amount of annual expenditure can ever be sufficient. If you accept the opinions of military men, who tell a Minister that they would throw upon him the whole responsibility in the event of a war breaking out, and predict the loss of this or the other valuable possession, then the country must be overwhelmed by taxation. It is inevitable that risks

should be run. Peel's declaration was, and must at all times remain, the language of common sense, and it furnishes the key to Cobden's characteristic attitude towards a whole class of political questions where his counsels have been most persistently disregarded.[1]

It was thus from the political, and not from the religious or humanitarian side, that Cobden sought to arouse men to the criminality of war. If an unnecessary war is a crime, then to supply the funds for it, even for the sake of an extra fraction per cent, is to be an accessory before or after the fact in that crime. And that is the wise and timely sermon for which Cobden took the events of those days for a text. In the case of land, the world was quite ready to recognize the truth, that property has its duties as well as its rights. Cobden's views on the morality of war loans extends the same principle to the whole administration of property of every kind.

Speculative forecasts of this sort were uncongenial enough to the veteran practitioner at the Foreign Office, who manipulated events on other principles. Things were now moving strangely counter to Cobden's hopes. When Russia and Austria pressed for the surrender of the Hungarian refugees, Lord Palmerston despatched the fleet to the Dardanelles by way of encouragement to the Porte to hold firm. According to Cobden, this was a superfluous display of force. As he contended, the demands of Russia and Austria had been already withdrawn in face of a vigorous display of the public opinion of Western Europe. What is certain is that Lord Palmerston's action at this time laid the train which not long

[1] The passage from Peel was quoted by Cobden, *Speeches*, ii. 414.

1850. Æt. 46.

afterwards exploded in the Crimean War. His next step was exactly calculated to embitter the chronic struggle between England, France, and Russia in the East, and by its peculiar lawlessness to set an example which was sure to be followed, of the worst possible way of settling international difficulties. There happened to be certain claims which the British Government had for a long time been pressing against the kingdom of Greece. A portion of these claims were made on behalf of a Portuguese Jew from Gibraltar, whom accident of domicile made a British subject, and after him the whole episode has been known as the affair of Don Pacifico. What Lord Palmerston did was to despatch the fleet on its way back from the Dardanelles to the Piræus. There it detained not only a man-of-war belonging to the Greek Government, but a number of merchant vessels owned by private individuals. They were detained as material guarantees. There has been very little difference of opinion since, that this was an intolerably high-handed proceeding. As is observed by Finlay, the sagacious historian of Greece, who chanced to be a claimant, though of a more reputable sort than Don Pacifico, no Government in a civilized state of society can be allowed to have a right to seize private property belonging to the subjects of another State, or to blockade the port of another State, without taking upon itself the responsibility of declaring war.[1] Apart from this, it was a direct and certain provocation to two Powers, whom it was especially our interest at this time to soothe and conciliate.[2]

[1] See Mr. Finlay's story of the whole transaction in his most valuable *Hist. of Greece*, vii. 211, etc. Mr. Finlay's verdict is that "the whole affair reflects very little credit on any of the Governments that took part in it."

[2] "I conceive," said Sir Robert Peel, "that there was an

1850.
Æt. 46.

France interposed with the proffer of good offices, and they were accepted. But Lord Palmerston so blundered and mismanaged the subsequent negotiations, that at one moment we were brought unpleasantly near to a rupture with the French Government, while we were at the same time exposed to remonstrances from Russia, of which the most mortifying feature was that they were absolutely and unanswerably well-founded both in policy and international morality. From beginning to end, alike in its inception and in every detail of it, equally in its purpose and its results, it was probably the most inept, futile, wrong-headed, and gravely mischievous transaction in which Lord Palmerston's recklessness ever engaged him.

The discussion which took place upon these doings in the House of Commons really covered the whole of Lord Palmerston's policy, and the spirit and the principles of it. Not Sir Robert Peel alone, but Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, Sir James Graham, and Cobden, all bore with overpowering weight against the Minister, not only for his impolitic act in regard to Greece, but for his intervention in Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, and everywhere else. Lord Palmerston defended himself from the dusk of one day until

obvious mode of settling the claims without offending France, and without provoking a rebuke from Russia. My belief is that without any compromise of your own dignity, you might have got the whole money you demanded, and avoided the difficulties in which you have involved yourselves with these Powers. With regard to Russia, you had just asserted the authority of England by remonstrating with her for attempting to expel ten refugees from Turkey. She acquiesced in your demands; and with regard to France you had all but the certainty of obtaining her cordial sympathy and good feeling. There never was a period in which it was more the interest of this country to conciliate the good feeling of Russia and France."—Speech in the Don Pacifico Debate, June 28. *Hansard*, cxii. 683.

1850. ÆT. 46.

the dawn of another with an energy and skill which commanded the admiration even of those who thought worst of his case. He was supported by Mr. Cockburn, afterwards the brilliant Chief Justice of our time, in a speech which is undeniably one of the most glittering and successful pieces of advocacy ever heard either in forum or senate. It is only when we turn to the real facts and the sober reason of the case, that we perceive that the fine things and impassioned turns of this striking performance were in truth no better than heroics for the jury and superb claptrap.[6] Half a dozen of Sir Robert Peel's sober sentences in his reply—the last speech that he ever made—were enough to overthrow the whole gorgeous fabric.

The issues were broadly and unmistakably placed. Whether in defending the rights of British subjects abroad or in other dealings with foreign nations, the Minister of this country ought to seek his end by politic and conciliatory means, or go rudely to it by violence and armed force? Whether it is his business to interfere with lectures or with ships in the domestic

[1] As Cobden left the House after Mr. Cockburn's speech, he was joined by Mr. Disraeli. "I call yours," he said to Cobden, "the Manchester School of Oratory; and I call his the Crown and Anchor School." * Cobden was never a great admirer of the eloquent lawyer. The first occasion on which they met was at a dinner-party during the height of the League agitation. "He took the Protectionists' side," said Cobden, "and we had a long wrangle before the whole company. As I was top-sawyer on that plank, I had no difficulty in flinging him pretty often." They met again at dinner the very day after the Pacifico division. Sir Alexander Cockburn permitted himself to use some of those asperities—Cobden called them by a more stinging name—which the sworn party-man is apt to use against a conscientious dissident. He told Cobden that he ought to be turned out of the Reform Club. But Cobden was always able to hold his own against impertinence, and the advocate took little by his motion.

* *Cobden to J. Parkes*, Nov. 23, 1856.

affairs of other countries, even on the side of self-government? Whether he should seek and manufacture occasions for intervention, or should on the contrary be too slow rather than too quick in recognizing even such occasions as arise of themselves? Whether interference should be frequent, peremptory, and at any cost, or should on the contrary be "rare, deliberate, decisive in character, and effectual for its end"?[1] Whether England should make light of the restraints of the law of nations, pushing the claim of the *Civis Romanus* with a high and unflinching hand, or should on the contrary by her strictness of care and scruple fortify and enlarge that domain which justice and peace have already acquired for themselves among the brotherhood of nations? Such were the topics and the issues of the controversy. The victory was to the old idols of the tribe and the market-place. The foreign policy of Lord Palmerston was approved, and its author encouraged, by a majority of six and forty.

1850. ÆT. 46.

The effect of this remarkable debate was very great. It is true that it was not wholly a debate on the merits. Under government by parties, a debate wholly on the merits is very uncommon. The question nominally at issue was mixed up with suspicion of a French diplomatic conspiracy, and belief in a Protectionist intrigue. The public was indignant that a domestic faction should lend itself for purposes of its own to a cabal of foreigners against a Minister who had been too clever for them. It is true, also, that when we talk of the public during these years, the phrase does not designate the nation at large, even in the limited sense in which it does this now. In every epoch the political public really means the people who have votes, and at that

[1] Mr. Gladstone's description.

1850. ÆT. 46.

time the people who had votes were an extremely small fraction of the nation at large. When that is said, however, there is very little doubt that the language which Lord Palmerston used on this occasion was the language which the majority of Englishmen were not sorry to hear, and would not be likely to repudiate when it had been boldly spoken. The day after the Don Pacifico debate, Lord Palmerston was justified in speaking of himself as having been rendered by it the most popular Minister that for a very long time had held his office.[1]

The confusion of parties made this sudden exaltation of Lord Palmerston a very important event, and we may believe that he was quite alive to the possibilities which it opened to his ambition. Public life, as was said, was divided at that particular moment between statesmen without a party and a party without statesmen. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli had made a bold bid for power, but Lord Palmerston foresaw that they could not keep it if they got it. The reforming Whigs of the type of Lord John Russell had been steadily losing ground ever since their brilliant triumph twenty years before, and they were now lower in popular influence than they had ever been. The Manchester School were out of the question. There was one statesman only whose authority, and the clearness of whose convictions, might have baulked Lord Palmerston's rise, and have saved the country from the demoralization of the Palmerstonian reign. This statesman, by a most disastrous destiny, met his death the very day after he had protested with all the cogent sagacity of his ripened experience against Lord Palmerston's unsafe policy, and his mistaken impressions of the honour and dignity of the country.

[1] Mr. Ashley's *Life*, ii. 161.

1850.
ÆT. 46.

The death of Sir Robert Peel may without exaggeration be described as one of the most untoward incidents in Cobden's public life, as it was a dire and irreparable loss to the country. Cobden was instantly alive to the calamity. "Poor Peel," he wrote three days after the event, "I have scarcely yet realized to my mind the conviction that he will never again occupy his accustomed seat opposite to my place in the House, I sat with him on Saturday till two o'clock in the Royal Commission[1]—the last public business in which he was engaged—and in four hours afterwards he received his mortal stroke. We do not yet know the full extent of our loss. It will be felt in the state of parties and in the progress of public business to its full extent hereafter. I had observed his tendencies most attentively during the last few years, and had felt convinced that on questions in which I take a great interest, such as the reduction of armaments, retrenchment of expenditure, the diffusion of peace principles, etc., he had strong sympathies—stronger than he had yet expressed—in favour of my views. Read his last speech again, and observe what he says about diplomacy, and in favour of settling international disputes by reference to mediation instead of by ships of war."[2]

If the Don Pacifico debate in Parliament gave a check to the confidence of Cobden's aspirations, a storm which burst out over the length and breadth of the land a few months later, still more effectually chilled his faith in the hold of good sense and the spirit of tolerance upon the minds of his countrymen. In the autumn of 1850, Great Britain was convulsed by the tempest of the Papal Aggression, which now

[1] The Commission for the Great Exhibition of 1851.
[2] *To G. Hadfield*, July 5, 1850.

1849. looks none the less repulsive because we can see to what a degree it was ludicrous. Unfortunately Lord John Russell lent himself to the prejudices and alarms which are so instantly roused in the minds of Englishmen and Scotchmen by anything that reminds them of the existence of the Roman Catholic Church. He fanned the flame by a letter to the Bishop of Durham, which has as conspicuous a place among his acts and monuments as the letter from Edinburgh in 1845. In a damaging moment for his position at this time, as well as for his future political reputation, he brought in and passed a measure, as much to be blamed for the bigotry which inspired it, as for the futility of its provisions. The effect in the balanced state of parties was to give an irretrievable shake to his Administration, for his willing concessions to the bigotry of England and Scotland kindled the just resentment of Ireland. The Irish vote was indispensable to every Whig Ministry since the Reform Bill, and this was now alienated from the Government of Lord John Russell. Its fall could only be a matter of a few months, and was only delayed even for that short time by the difficulty of finding or devising a political combination that should take its place.

ÆT. 45.

The following extracts from his correspondence will show what Cobden was doing and thinking about between the winter of 1849 and the winter of 1851:—

"*Leeds*, *Dec.* 18, 1849. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—I have received your despatches; don't trouble yourself to send the proofs of the speeches. I am staying with Mrs. Carbutt, who has taken me from Mr. Schofield and Mr. Marshall. In fact, judging by the competition that there was for me, I am rather at a premium. The meeting this evening promises

1850.
ÆT. 46.

to be a very full and influential one. I wish it was over, for I am sorely perplexed at these demonstrations, for want of something fresh to say."

"*Leeds, Dec.* 19. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—We had a most thoroughly successful meeting last evening, and I spoke with tolerably good effect, but I am not sure that I shall not appear in the reports to have been rather rough with the landlords. At all events, I expect the Protectionists will raise a fierce howl at me."

"*Bradford, Dec.* 21.—We had a very successful meeting here last evening, and I made a speech upon the Colonies, which I hope will be freely reported, for it is my opinion that it went pretty fully into the arguments, and is calculated to diffuse sound information upon the subject. The people here have resolved to republish it for cheap distribution."

"*April* 18. (*To James Mellor.*)—I observed in a paper the other day an account of the interference of our Admiral on the South American station for the purpose of demanding the settlement of certain claims made by creditors upon the Government of Venezuela. The account stated that the demand included the payment of money due for Loans. My object in writing is to ask whether you can ascertain for me through any house having relations there, whether the claim of the Stock Exchange creditors was included. I consider these debts to be totally different from those due to merchants for property in the form of merchandise *sold* to foreign States, or for goods seized unjustly in time of hostilities. Money *lent* through the Stock Exchange is generally advanced on such terms as to cover known risks of repudiation, etc. Besides the money is advanced by foreigners even when the loan is nominally contracted in England, and the result of our Government becoming

1850. ÆT. 46

the collectors of such debts would be that we should be made the bumbailiffs of half a dozen nations besides our own. I am watching very jealously any step of the kind, because if the principle be once adopted, it is not easy to see where we can stop. If we are to blockade the coast of a South American State, how can we refuse the creditors of the repudiating State of Mississippi to blockade the port of New Orleans? There will be obvious disgrace as well as injustice in dealing differently with weak and with powerful States."

"*April* 18. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—Look in the money article of the *Times* to-day. The creditors of the Spanish Government are talking of petitioning Parliament to collect their debts. We must watch with jealousy the first attempt of this kind, and be prepared to agitate against it. Did you see the report in the papers that the Admiral on the South American station had demanded the debts due to English creditors of the Government of Venezuela? I am anxious to know whether the Stock Exchange Loans are included in the claims. Do you know anybody in the City who would inform us?"

"*April* 23. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—It seems that there is—if we may judge of the article in to-day's *Times*—a prospect of still further delay about the Greek affair. Would it not be well to draw up a memorial to the Prime Minister, or else a petition to Parliament upon the subject? The object, of course, should be to show the propriety of submitting the whole affair to the arbitration of disinterested parties. It is just the case for arbitration. And the memorial should speak in terms of strong condemnation of a system of International Policy, which leaves the possibility of two nations being brought to such a state of hostility upon questions of such insignificant importance.

1850.
Æt. 46.

Here is a dispute about a few thousand pounds or of personal insult, matters which might be equitably adjusted by two or three impartial individuals of average intelligence and character, for the settlement of which a fleet of line-of-battle ships has been put in requisition, and the entire commerce of a friendly nation largely engaged in trade with our own people has been for months subjected to interruption. It should be stated that apart from the outrage which such proceedings are calculated to inflict upon the feelings of humanity and justice, they must tend to bring diplomacy into disrepute. Without offering any opinion on the merits of the question, you should pray that our Government should agree at once to submit the whole matter to the absolute decision of arbitrators mutually appointed, and it might be added that this case affords a strong argument for entering upon a general system of arbitration treaties, by which such great inconveniences and dangers springing from such trivial causes may be averted for the future. It seems to me that this is an occasion on which you might frame a very practical memorial, and thus put the present system in the wrong in the eyes of even those men of business and politicians who do not go with you on principle."

"*July* 2. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*) — I am getting famously abused for my vote on Roebuck's Motion, but I never felt more satisfied than I do on the course I took. The accounts of poor Peel's health are very unsatisfactory. I fear very much the worst. It would be a great national calamity to lose him, and with him we should lose the best safeguard, if not the only one amongst statesmen, against a reaction at headquarters from Free Trade to Protection."

"*July* 4. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—You will have seen

1850. ÆT. 46.

the sad news of Sir R. Peel's death. I have not been able to think of anything since. Poor soul, his health had been sacrificed by his sufferings in the cause of Free Trade, and he may be said to have died a victim to the best act of his political life. I should not like to be in the position of those who by their unsparing hostility inflicted martyrdom upon him."

At the close of the session, Cobden proceeded to the Peace Congress, which this year was held at Frankfort.

"*Cologne, Aug.* 17. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—My companions and I reached the station just in time to catch the train, and we reached Dover without further adventure. There we found that the wind had been blowing hard for a couple of days, so much so that the mail of the previous night from Calais was several hours behind its time. This was not a very agreeable prospect. Our boat was fixed to start for Ostend at eleven at night, and so, after taking some long walks about the town and neighbourhood, we took a comfortable dinner at six. At nine o'clock the boat was obliged to leave the harbour, and cast anchor outside to save the tide. We went aboard with our luggage, and for upwards of two hours we were rocking at anchor in a heavy swell. I lay down on my back in the cabin (for there were no berths), which, as soon as the mail-train arrived at eleven with the passengers, was full of people, and I never had a more uncomfortable night. I lay in one posture till we had fairly cast anchor in the port of Ostend, with my bones and flesh aching as if I had been beaten. On opening my eyes and sitting up I found that my next neighbour was Count A——, who had passed a terrible night, and who looked anything but the Adonis he strives to appear in the drawing-room. We started from Ostend at seven

1850.
ÆT. 46.

o'clock in the morning, and got to Cologne at nine at night, where we found ourselves with all the discomfort of reaching a strange town without knowing the language, and the little *contretemps* at the baggage-office upset my temper. The trials of my temper were increased when, on driving with an omnibus-load of fellow-passengers to the best hotel, we found there not a bed to be had, and so we had to hunt about the town till nearly ten o'clock, when we took refuge in a not first-rate hotel; the dining-room, where we took a cup of tea, was filled with Germans, with beards on their chins and pipes in their mouths, playing cards and dominoes. However, a night's rest has restored my equanimity again. The crowd of travellers, particularly English, exceeds all past experience. It is lucky for me that I have a comfortable reception awaiting me at Frankfort."

"*Frankfort, Aug.* 23. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—We yesterday held our first sitting of the Congress, in the same place where the German Parliament assembled. It is a large church of a semicircular form, newly fitted up and decorated with flags, and capable of holding 3000 persons. It was well filled during the day. The number of delegates and visitors to the Congress is about 500 or 600; but by far the largest portion are English. However, we have some good names from France. Cormenin (Conseiller d'État) and Emile de Girardin are both here, and spoke yesterday. Cormenin read a speech full of point, as everything is which comes from his pen. Amongst other 'spiritual' things, he said, 'there is one thing which all will admit to be far more impossible than the putting an end to war, viz. to put an end to *death*, and why should we not use half as much exertion to escape war as to escape death?'

1850. Æt. 46.

"Strange to say we had Haynau, the Austrian general, sitting in the meeting. He is staying at a hotel here. I took the opportunity, in my speech, of alluding to the fact of having met him and Klapka at the two last peace meetings I had attended. He is a tall man, with a pair of white moustaches, which come down to his shoulders. His aspect is not prepossessing. I suspect there is some truth in the remark of a lady of Pesth, who expressed an opinion that he was not always in his right senses. Upon the whole, I am very well satisfied with the meeting. We are gaining ground."

"*Nov.* 9. (*To G. Combe.*)—I am afraid you overrate the importance of our Manchester educational conference.[1] The difficulties in the way of success are not much diminished since I wrote to you to excuse my apparent apathy. I want standing-ground for the House of Commons. At present the Liberal party, the soul of which is Dissent, are torn to pieces by the question, and it is not easy to heal a religious feud. The Tories, whatever they may say to the contrary, are at heart opposed to the enlightenment of the people. They are naturally so from an instinct of self-preservation. They will therefore seek every pretence for opposing us. If I could say

[1] Cobden had no sooner returned from the Peace Congress than he threw himself once more into the long and intricate struggle for National Education. He went to the most important centres of population, where he sought private interviews with bodies of men who were interested in the question, procuring a full and free discussion of vexed topics which were usually conducted with the heat and bitterness peculiar to sectarian quarrels. The Churchmen had moved a step forward; they no longer claimed a monopoly of grants from the State: they now proposed that all the denominations should receive public money for their religious teaching. It was a proposal, as Cobden said, by which everybody should be called upon to pay for the religious teaching of everybody else. This led to the conference at Manchester, January 22, 1851.

1850.
ÆT. 46.

I represented the Radical party or any other party upon the question, I should have some standing-ground in the House. But the greatest of all causes has no *locus standi* in Parliament. I thought I had given time to Mr. Baines and his dissenting friends to get cool upon the subject. But they appear to be as hot as ever. However, I shall now go straight at the mark, and shall neither give nor take quarter. I have made up my mind to go for the Massachusetts system as nearly as we can get it.[1] You would be puzzled at my objecting to the word 'secular.' If I had seen, before I spoke upon the subject, that the word occurred again in the body of the resolution, I should not have taken the objection; for, after all, the words of Shakspeare, 'What's in a name?' apply very much to this case. We all mean the same thing, *to teach the people something necessary for their well being, which the ministers of religion do not teach them.* I perceive a difficulty in arguing the case if we profess to exclude the Bible from all schools. I would rather take the Massachusetts ground, and say that no book shall be admitted into the schools which favours the doctrines of any particular religious sect; but this in a Protestant country could hardly be said to include the Bible. In the Lancashire public school plan, it was proposed to have extracts from the Scriptures only, and this was the best mode of meeting the difficulty in a county where there are so many Roman Catholics. But this is very different from the case of Rutland, where there is not probably a Catholic, and certainly more than half the parishes of England and Wales are in

[1] That is to say, education provided from local rates, free, compulsory, and secular in the sense of excluding books that teach the doctrine of any particular sect. The plan which Cobden favoured was after twenty years of lost time practically accepted, with the important exception that elementary instruction is not yet gratuitous.

1850. ÆT. 46.

the same predicament. Still I do not shut my eyes to the fact that we shall be accused of teaching religion, just as certainly as we should be charged with irreligion if we excluded the Bible. However, there is the Massachusetts plan and its effects to fall back upon, and we must trust to time and discussion to put matters right in this country."

"*Manchester, Thursday, Nov.* 22. (*To Mr. Bright.*) —I have come over here to attend a private meeting of the School Committee, and shall go to Birmingham to-morrow to pass a day or two with Sturge, and see Chance's glass works, and Fox and Henderson's establishment. I hope you will come to Birmingham and attend both the Freehold Land Society and the Peace Meeting, if for no other purpose, to let the fools and knaves who are raising this Guy Fawkes outcry know that there are people in the country who are thinking of something more important than the Queen's spiritual supremacy.

"I should like you to speak against the consecrating of the banners, and if you found your audience all right, it would be a glorious thing to be able to rebuke the Protestant bigots, and say a word for the religious rights of a fourth of the population of the Empire. What a disgusting display is this Cockney No-Popery cry, headed by Johnny Russell, who bids fair to close his political career in the character of a religious persecutor. The end of it will be a reaction in favour of the Roman Catholics, and increased strength to their priesthood, which I don't wish to see. In the meantime the old sore is opened in Ireland, and there is a new lease for Guy Fawkes, and the 'Immortal memory'—and my cynical brother will be confirmed in his doctrine that we are, after all, not progressive creatures, but only revolving in a circle of instincts. Verily we

1851.
ÆT. 47.

have not made great strides during the last two centuries in religious toleration."

"*Feb.* 15. (*To J. Sturge.*)—Is there no way of bringing out a declaration from the friends of religious equality in Birmingham against the Whig Bill for inflicting pains and penalties upon the Roman Catholics? Birmingham was the first to give a check to the public meetings in the North. Could it not have the honour of taking the lead in promulgating a sound declaration of opinion against all interference by the legislature in the religious concerns of the people? I should like to see a declaration put forth repudiating the rights of the Parliament to encourage by temporal rewards, or to discourage by temporal penalties, the progress of any religious opinions. Surely the mass of the people of Birmingham are favourable to this principle; it is in fact the principle of religious liberty which all parties profess to advocate, but so few are prepared to practise. Suppose you were to call a few friends together and take their advice as to whether anything can be done. We are going back rapidly in the House, and unless helped from without, our case is hopeless."

"*London, Feb.* 19. (*To J. Sturge.*)—I expect that this No-Popery cry will prove fatal to the Ministry. It is generally thought that the Government will be in a minority on some important question, probably the Income Tax, in less than a fortnight. The Irish Catholic members are determined to do everything to turn out Lord John. Indeed Ireland is in such a state of exasperation with the Whigs, that no Irish member having a Catholic constituency will have a chance of being elected again unless he votes through thick and thin to upset the Ministry. We may have a dissolution this spring, and if either party should be wicked

1851. Æt. 47.

enough to raise the No-Popery cry, Heaven only knows what the result may be. One thing is certain; the Irish Catholics will send none but Catholics, and they will hold the balance of power in the House, and if they were sixty Quakers instead of Irish Catholics, they would dictate terms to any Ministry. This unsettled state of parties makes it more important that we should raise the banner of religious equality."

"*Feb.* 25. (*To J. Parkes.*)—The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill is the real cause of the upset of the Whig coach, or rather of the coachman leaping from the box to escape an upset.[1] This measure cannot be persevered in by any Government so far as Ireland is concerned, for no Government can exist, if fifty Irish members are pledged to vote against them under all circumstances when they are in danger. A dissolution would give at least fifty members to do that work, and they would be all watched as they are now by their constituents. Probably a bishop or two would be sent up to town to keep them in the true fold, and see that they did not fall into the hands of the Treasury shepherd.

"This mode of fighting by means of adverse votes in the House is far more difficult to deal with by our aristocratic rulers, than was the plan of O'Connell when he called his monster meetings. They could be stopped by a proclamation or put

[1] Ministers were defeated on a private member's Bill to lower the county franchise to £10, which they opposed. On Feb. 22 it was announced that Lord John Russell had resigned. Lord Stanley was sent for, but gave up the task. The Peelites were the difficulty. Without them there could be no strong Government. They declined to join Lord Stanley from differences as to commercial policy, and their vigorous disapproval of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill prevented them from joining Lord John Russell. After a short interregnum Lord John and his colleagues returned to office.

1851.
ÆT. 47.

down by soldiers, but neither of these modes will avail in the House. What folly it was to give a real representation to the Irish counties, and to think of still maintaining the old persecuting ascendancy.[1]

"I do not see how Lord John and the Whigs are to recover from the false position into which they have been flung by his letter and his speech. They have traded for the last fifteen years as a political party upon Irish questions; but now that capital is exhausted. Even if they withdrew their measure, which is hardly possible, it would not restore them to the confidence of the Irish. They are in a regular mess, and I do not see any way out of it for them. It is understood that Graham refuses to join the Whigs. He is against the Papal outcry, and walked out of the House on the first reading.

"Now all this is a good ground for your getting up a demonstration against the Bill. It must be withdrawn, whether you take a part or not. But it is very desirable that the English people should be known by the Irish to have taken a part in ridding them of this insulting measure."

"*March* 13. (*To Mr. W. R. Greg.*)— . . . I doubt the policy of interfering in the Caffre business until we have more authentic news; the proper cure for these recurring wars is to let the colonists bear the brunt of them. This must be done by first giving them the powers of self-government, and then

[1] Cobden is here at the very heart of the deplorable tale of English mismanagement of Ireland since Catholic Emancipation. We invited the Irish to send representatives of their wishes and views to Parliament, but, until to a small extent in our own day, their views and wishes counted for nothing in the House of Commons. Of course the spirit of the Titles Bill was in miniature the same as the spirit of the Penal Code. Nothing could have been more nicely calculated to deepen Irish dislike for English supremacy, and Irish contempt for English professions of equality and tolerance.

1851. throwing on them the responsibility of their own policy. They would then be very careful to treat the neighbouring savages with justice. At present it is the interest of the colonists to provoke the natives into war, because it leads to a most profitable expenditure of British money."

Æt. 47.

"*March* 15. (*To Mr. E. Potter.*)— . . . As for politics, nobody can foresee for a week what will happen. Parties were a good deal confused before, thanks to Corn; but now the Catholic element has made confusion worse confounded. Of this be assured, all the embarrassments in the House, at Court, and in the Cabinet, have sprung out of the Papal question. It may suit the Whigs to abuse the Radicals, or make the Manchester school their whipping boys; but it is Lord Johnny's Durham letter and his Bill that are at the bottom of all the mischief. For the last fifteen years, ever since 1835, the Whigs, when in power, have depended for their political existence upon the votes of the Irish members. If that support had been at any time withdrawn in consequence of a Durham letter, they must have gone out of office. And they must go out now. The only thing that keeps them in, is the impossibility of finding anybody to take their places. In fact, it is difficult to see who is to govern. Any Government that perseveres in the anti-Papal policy will be opposed by the Irish members on every subject, and if an Administration were to come in to do nothing against the Pope, they would, I suppose, be turned out by the English. So that we are in a rather considerable fix.

"I will back the Irish to win, though they have long odds against them, because they have right and justice on their side. In fact, we are exhibiting ourselves in this year of the Exhibition as the most

intolerant people on earth. Europe cries shame on us, and America laughs at us. Our course is that of the dog in the manger. We will not come to an agreement with the Pope, as the Emperor of Russia does, by which he has a voice in the appointment of the Roman Catholic bishops in his Polish provinces (his Ireland), nor will we allow the Irish to manage their own spiritual affairs without our aid or intervention, as is done in the United States. Was ever anything so absurdly unjust? Well may our statesmen, such as Graham, Aberdeen, and so on, decline to take office to carry out such a system. I will venture to say that there is not a leading statesman in any country of Europe or America, who would for a moment take upon himself the responsibility of treating seven millions of Catholics as we are doing.

"As respects the prospects of Free Trade, they are safe enough if we can have an appeal to the country upon that question 'pure and simple.' But if the Protectionists can throw in the religious cry, heaven only knows what may be the consequence. All I can say is that if the people are determined to indulge their bigotry even at the cost of a tax on their bread, it is their affair and not mine. I shall as resolutely oppose Protestant monopoly as Protectionist monopoly.

"I am glad to hear such good accounts of you. I would not advise you to come to Parliament, although I should like to have you on the same bench with me. For my part I am so disgusted with these theological squabbles that I should be delighted if I could bolt out of the political ring. But there is no such luck."

"*Dunford, April* 22. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—I left Chichester with Elcome yesterday, in the midst of rain, and it has been raining ever since. I can

1851. Æt. 47.

hardly see the trees on the side of the hill leading up to Walker's, and the Downs are quite lost in the thick mist. I am of course a prisoner, which is very disagreeable. Yesterday, whilst at Chichester, I was very extravagant in the purchase of a great number of roses in pots, which I expect to arrive to-day, and I shall have them taken out of the pots and placed in the garden. They are all of the autumn perpetual kinds. I intend to have a bed of them on the rising ground just at the end of the house, not coming forward too far to interfere with the view of the Downs. I shall also have a bed in the front of the house. We shall shine in roses. The hollies and evergreens are still looking rather sorry and downcast. But, probably, with dry warm weather we shall soon see an improvement. The temperature is mild, and the wheats are looking vigorous. The nightingale and cuckoo are already heard in the hanger, and the foliage of the woods is assuming a lively hue. I long for the time when we can be here with the children in the autumn. You will enjoy it beyond measure."

"*May* 21. (*To Mr. W. R. Greg.*)—What the Whig Government intend to do I know not.[1] But of this I am quite sure, that if they do not intend to bring forward a measure calculated to excite some enthusiasm in the country, they had better leave us as we are, to fight the battle upon the Free Trade question. In my opinion, no measure will rouse the middle class, or have the slightest chance of meeting any response from the county constituency, unless the ballot form a part of it; and I fear that Lord John will flinch from that. The present system is

[1] This refers to the Ministerial proposals, which were in various shapes before the public from this time until the Crimean War, for Parliamentary Reform.

1851.
ÆT. 47.

worn out. There must be a new departure taken, with a better crew on board the Government vessel, and an avowed and definite destination in view. Until this fresh start be taken, we shall be in a transition state, and even when we get a reformed Parliament and an enlarged constituency, it may take a long time to enable the people to make up their minds what they shall do with their power. I am not sanguine (since the Papal outburst) of living to see the political millennium which some people expect from another Reform Bill. But I repeat, the present system is come to a dead-lock, and whether for good or evil, the people must be called in to give a preponderance to one or the other political scale."

This year the first Great Exhibition was opened. I cannot find that Cobden was in any way responsible for the excessive importance which was so irrationally attributed to this once famous enterprise. He did not believe that it marked the arrival of a pacific transformation, but he thought that he might take people sufficiently at their word to propose to the House of Commons that the Foreign Minister should be recommended to open negotiations with France for a reduction of armaments. He stipulated for nothing specific ; he only urged that an effort in this direction should be made at a time which seemed in every respect so incomparably propitious. Lord Palmerston hastened with virtuous alacrity to give a cordial adhesion to the general tendency of his honourable friend's views, but would prefer to be left with his hands free. Other members followed, showing in bright colours what a noble spectacle we should set to mankind, if a solemn resolution of Parliament should commission the Foreign Secretary to say openly to France, "We desire peace, and ask

1851. Æt. 47.

you to aid us in that great work." All this was the fashionable mood of the hour, just as declamatory panic was the mood of the hour after. There was no hypocrisy in either case. The instability arose from the omission of influential statesmen to keep in their minds a systematic survey of the facts of our national position in relation to Foreign Powers. There was no real basis consistently present to the legislature or the public, to justify their occasional fits of pacific profession. Cobden had no illusions as to the real progress of his opinions, but the fewer his illusions, the more strongly he felt bound to persevere.

It was not to be expected that Cobden would be able to speak so freely as he was accustomed to do on military and naval matters, without touching that susceptibility which is common to all experts, and to experts in these two great services more even than in others. He often received insolent letters from officers who resented public discussions as private affronts. In 1850 a certain captain, whose operations in Borneo Cobden had spoken of as being of the nature of piracy, sent him a challenge to fight a duel. Cobden replied that if the writer repeated the offence, he would hand him over to the police. Vivacious journalists instantly taxed him with inconsistency. If he was for non-resistance, universal disarmament, and peace-at-any-price, with what decency could he talk of an appeal to the police? This folly was an excellent specimen of the criticism which Cobden was accustomed to receive at the hands of more responsible personages than the humorists of the press. In the same year an admiral in high position entered into a hostile correspondence with him on the ground of something which Mr. Bright was wrongly reported to have said. Cobden

1851.
ÆT. 47.

replied that his correspondent must expect, like all public men, to have his conduct freely canvassed, and that if he had so little control over his temper that he must needs challenge one member of the legislature to mortal combat because another member was reported to have made a mistake of a single word in a speech of an hour's length, or because a reporter's pen may have slipped at a critical moment, then the admiral had mistaken his vocation, and ought to retire from the public service. Cobden's reply was too direct to be courteous, but the provocation was sharp.

We may now proceed to correspondence of a graver kind, principally with Mr. Bright:—

"*Sept.* 29. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I have been looking out for signs and omens of the political future, but cannot say I see any indications of a breeze in the direction of Reform. People are too well-to-do in the world to agitate for anything. Did you ever know or read of any movement for organic change when wheat was under 40s., to say nothing of cotton at 4d.? I am willing to do my share in the House or out of it, as an individual; but when you suggest a Conference under the auspices of Wilson and ourselves in Manchester, it is well to consider whether we may not be under the risk of deceiving ourselves or misleading others as to the meaning of such a step.

"If we move together at the head of an organization, it will be assumed that we are going to bring the League following with us. This will be a delusion practised upon people at a distance, and probably upon ourselves; for depend on it, we shall not carry with us those who co-operated with us in that struggle. Since I have been down here [Midhurst], I have been amusing myself under an

1851. Æt. 47.

old yew-tree by looking over several bushels of old letters which I received during the League agitation. The names of all those who did the work of that seven years' struggle are fresh in my memory. *Do not deceive yourself; the same men will not fight the battle of Parliamentary Reform.* If we go into the conflict, we must seek for recruits from amongst another class. Let this be understood beforehand by ourselves and the public; otherwise we do harm to all parties, by misleading the country and ourselves.

"But is it not a proof that the country is not ripe for a really great measure of Reform, that there is no spontaneous movement for it? In all great movements, new men spring up. *They* are the vouchers for the reality of the public interest in the Reform in question. When the Catholics were ready to free themselves, it was so. When the days of the Corn Law were numbered, it was so. But where are the men who now ask you and me and Wilson to put ourselves at their head, to effect another Reform of Parliament? . . . Where are the influential local men who are guarantees for the earnestness of any considerable body of reliable partisans throughout the kingdom? We are bound to look about us for some security of the kind. Nay, as practical men of this world, we should be guilty of a wanton waste of the little moral influence we possess, if we did not take a calm survey of the prospects of support before plunging into a fresh agitation. Lopez may be pitied, or blamed, according as people believe him to have had the opportunity of knowing beforehand the opinion of the Cuban population; but nobody will ever excuse you or me for miscalculating the force of public opinion upon any question.

1851.
ÆT. 47.

"We can learn what the people want, if we take the trouble and the time to inquire. I confess that before I embark in any formal proceeding, I should like to have better evidence than I have hitherto had of the determination of the public to carry a thorough measure of Reform. To judge by appearances, nobody cares about it. There may be a change. When the breeze stirs, I think I shall perceive the ripple on the water as soon as anybody.

"I am not, as you suppose, desponding about political progress. I have faith in the onward tendency of our species. Not even the red cloaks of the Manchester aldermen can bring me to my cynical brother's doctrine, that we move in a circle of instincts, and return after a given cycle to the old starting-place (I admit, however, that the cloaks are a great triumph for his theory). If we are not now moving onward with great velocity, it is because we made a great rush for the goal of Free Trade, and the country has hardly yet recovered its breath sufficiently for a fresh start. But there is no danger of our standing still or becoming stagnant. The repeal of the Corn Law was a severe dose of alterative medicine, which is working by a self-acting process a gradual change in the body politic. It may take time, but the effects are sure. I am living in a part of the country where I can witness its operations."

"*Midhurst, Oct.* 1. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—Your letter of the 25th has only to-day come to hand, without any explanation of the cause of the delay.

"I observe that you are hopeful of aid from Baines and Co. Have you seen the *Mercury* of Saturday? It is lukewarm, or less tepid even than that! Gives the go-by to the ballot, opposes our honest redistribution because it would give an 11th

1851. Æt. 47. of the representation to London, and objects to household suffrage with the old and perverse plea that it would give a preponderance to the agricultural districts.

"By the way, with reference to what you heard from —— about the register. I may here say that my mind is made up not to stand again for the West Riding. I shall take an early opportunity of announcing my intention. Apart from the Free Trade question, I don't see what *principle* I could represent in the West Riding. If Baines be a representative of the opinions of the influential Liberals of the Riding, we are as wide as the poles asunder upon the vital questions of the day. I will sit for no place where the constituency will not back me in an active opposition to all invasions of the principle of religious equality. That question stands in my judgment before that of commercial freedom. And seeing how the majority of dissenting politicians have violated the rights of conscience by supporting the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, I feel by no means certain that I shall find any constituency which will return me on my own terms, about which, however, I feel no nervous anxiety. I see nothing but party animosity and political tergiversation in prospect in the House for some years to come.

"I agree with you to the letter in all you say about Ireland. There is no doubt that the land question (coupled with the Church Establishment) is at the root of the evil. And here let me say that I go heartily with you in the determination to attack the land monopoly root and branch both here and in Ireland and Scotland. There is an article in this day's *Freeholder* ("Large and Small Farms") which will show you that our minds are running in the same direction. Wherever the deductions of political

economy lead I am prepared to follow. By the way, have you had time to read Bastiat's partly posthumous volume, *Les Harmonies Économiques*? If not, do so; it will require a studious perusal, but will repay it. He has breathed a soul into the dry bones of political economy, and has vindicated his favourite science from the charge of inhumanity with all the fervour of a religious devotee. 1851 ÆT. 47.

"But to return to the Land customs of this country. We have made no progress upon the subject of primogeniture during the last twenty years. Public opinion is either indifferent or favourable to the system of large properties kept together by entail. If you want a proof, see how every successful trader buys an estate, and tries to perpetuate his name in connexion with 'that ilk' by creating an eldest son. It is probably the only question on which, if an attempt were made to abolish the present system, France could be again roused to revolution; and yet we are in England actually hugging our feudal fetters! But we are a Chinese people. What a lucky thing it is that our grandmothers did not deform their feet *à la Chinoise*! if so, we should have had a terrible battle to emancipate women's toes. But, however unprepared the public may be for our views on the land question, I am ready to incur any obloquy in the cause of economical truth. And it is, I confess, on this class of questions, rather than on plans of organic reform, that I feel disposed to act the part of a pioneer.

"The extension of the suffrage must and will come, but it chills my enthusiasm upon the subject when I see so much popular error and prejudice prevailing upon such questions as the Colonies, religious freedom, and the land customs of this country. I do not mean to say that these thoughts

1851. ÆT. 47.

make me for an instant falter in my advocacy of the extension of the franchise, but they make me doubt whether I may not be better employed in trying to diffuse sound practical views, than in fighting for forms or theories of government which do not necessarily involve the fate of practical legislation at all. The greatest obstacle to any improvement or change in John Bull's sentiments just now is the egregious vanity of the beast. He has been so plastered with flattery, for which he seems to have an insatiable appetite, that he has become an impervious mass of self-esteem. Nothing is so difficult as to alter the policy of individuals or nations who allow themselves to be persuaded that they are the 'envy of surrounding nations and the admiration of the world.' Time and adversity can alone operate in such cases."

"*October* 29. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I thought I had so repeatedly explained myself upon the Reform movement, that it must prevent any misunderstanding between us as to my meaning. I do not advocate our doing nothing. I am prepared to do something. We must all do our best. But the question, and the only question which I was discussing, is whether we shall call a Conference in Manchester. That means in the eyes of the public that the men who call the Conference, and who put themselves at its head, are prepared to organize an agitation. Have we duly reckoned the chances of making Manchester the headquarters of a successful Reform movement? I doubt its success. A Conference would be only justifiable in my opinion, after we had been requested to call one by the reformers of the several localities from which we should invite delegates. I have seen no symptoms of any such movement anywhere. I wish you to draw the distinction in your

1851. ÆT. 47.

mind between our individual efforts in support of some such broad plan as Hume's, which I am prepared to make, and our calling a Conference in Manchester. Supposing the latter to be decided on, what will you do with Walmsley's Great-Little-go? Will you join it and merge in it, or will you set up a distinct organization? If the former, you will avoid all responsibility; but you will perhaps give an apparent force to a society which has little real strength, and thus tend to foster the delusion that more is doing than is really being done by it. If the latter, you incur a great responsibility; you can only be justified in superseding his society, by the certainty of establishing something better. In any case, we shall for a time have two suns in the firmament trying to outshine each other. Unless we make a very grand flare-up indeed, we shall be charged with impotent jealousy in trying to injure Walmsley's concern, without being able to set up anything better. Now, none of these difficulties arise if we act *individually*, instead of calling a Manchester Conference.

"I have thus again explained my views. We may differ, but cannot misunderstand each other. Having had my say, I by no means wish it to be supposed that I would refuse to join you and Wilson in any such demonstration, if you decide to hold one. I shall be in the north before the middle of next month, and will come and pass a night at your house. I am, however, under an engagement to be present at a Freehold Land Society's Conference in London, on the 25th of November (Monday).

"I don't know how soon I may be with you. The Leeds people have invited Kossuth to attend a meeting.[1] I don't know whether he will go. I have

[1] Kossuth landed at Southampton, from Turkey, on October 23.

1851. ÆT. 47. advised him from the first to be very chary in accepting invitations; but, if he should go there, I shall certainly be present. By the way, you will be curious to hear what sort of impression he made on me. Amiability, earnestness, and disinterestedness were the most speaking characteristics of the man. Speaking phrenologically, I should say he wants firmness; and the head is very small in the animal organs behind the ear. Altogether he did not impress me with a sense of his power to the extent which I had looked for. And yet he must possess it, for otherwise he could not have acquired an ascendancy over the aristocratic party in his country, where judging by the specimens I have seen amongst the refugees, he was brought into competition with men of no ordinary stamp. The secret of his influence lies, I suspect, in his eloquence. His speech at Winchester, delivered within forty-eight hours of his arrival in England, in a language with which he could have had but little practical acquaintance, was the most extraordinary exploit I ever witnessed. I have no doubt that with forty-eight hours' preparation, and a supply of the necessary materials, he would make as good a financial statement in the House as any public man amongst us. The speech he delivered was suggested by myself, and was spoken without preparation.

"I have not seen a report of the proceedings at the Southampton banquet, but am anxious to see how Lawrence, the American Minister, will get through his part of sympathizing with the Austrian rebel, who deposed the house of Hapsburg in Hungary, and was a few weeks ago hung in effigy by command of the Austrian Government. How will these diplomatists, with their starched etiquette, ever survive such a violation of their conventional rules?

1851. ÆT. 47.

Then how can the Austrian Minister remain at Washington after the President has invited Kossuth to be his guest, and given orders for his reception with military honours? Assuredly, these Democrats are destined to turn the diplomatic world upside down.

"You are quite right in saying that Palmerston wants to make political capital out of Kossuth. His tools have succeeded in getting a vote of thanks for him in Southampton, where the good folks have been in far too great a bustle to think of what they are doing. But you will have observed that Kossuth himself avoids saying anything in praise of Palmerston."

"*Nov.* 4. (*To F. W. Cobden.*)—It seems Kossuth will not go to Yorkshire, and I do not see the necessity of my attending the Manchester banquet. The *Times* has had a slap in the face which it will not soon forget or forgive. It has been fairly cowed by the universal execration it has brought upon itself. Yet what an absurd position we are in. So completely dictated to and domineered over by one newspaper, that it requires a periodical revolt of the whole people to keep the despot in tolerable order! If we had, as we might have, a dozen daily morning papers, of all prices, representing all opinions, and holding each other in check, there would be no necessity for these public meetings to protest against the misrepresentation of the press; which, so far as I take a part in them, are not the most safe or convenient, for one is always in danger of being identified with those who give vent in the excitement of the moment to very unsound and bellicose sentiments."

"*November* 7. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—As respects Sturge's plan of universal suffrage, although I am

1851. convinced we shall come to it some day, I do not think it would have so much support from the
ÆT. 47. electoral body as household suffrage. And we are too apt to forget that the mass of the people, however enthusiastic in favour of universal suffrage, have not the power of carrying that or any other measure, excepting with the aid of the middle class.

"Again, Sturge loses sight of the inequality of representation, which (even if we would risk the ballot) renders it quite impossible that we should make the Reform Bill a simple question of household or manhood suffrage. After all (you will say I am upon my hobby again) I look to the forty shilling freehold movement as the surest guarantee of our being able to break down the power of the aristocracy without an appeal to violence. A county or two quietly rescued from the landlords by this process will, when announced, do more to strike dismay into the camp of feudalism, and inspire the people with the assurance of victory, than anything we could do. As respects the Whig programme, if the ballot be left out, I will not be a party to the scheme, and I feel quite sure that it will be left out."

"*Midhurst, Nov.* 6. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I guarded myself as carefully as ever I did in my life from being seduced into an unsound position at Winchester, and it is only a proof of the terrible powers of perversion possessed by the *Times* that *you* have been influenced by its comments on my speech. The word 'Stop' as applied to Russia was used first by Kossuth in his speech. He said he wished us only to say, *Stop*. In my remarks I alluded to the unsound state of public opinion here, and our own violations of the principle of non-intervention in our foreign policy. I also referred to the fact that when the Russians invaded Hungary, so much were we under the influence of

1851.
Æt. 47.

those unsound opinions, that the tone of some of our leading papers was adverse to the Hungarian cause. I said, then let public opinion in England be set right by such speeches as we had just heard, and let us come into court with clean hands, by acting upon the principle of non-intervention ourselves, and let America join us in the same course (though she has rather given symptoms of following our bad example), and then the word 'Stop' addressed to Russia would have the force of a thousand cannons.

"I had, of course, a good deal of private talk with him all in the same strain, and distinctly told him that I had no other hope for him but in the general adoption of the principle of non-intervention as a public opinion of the civilized world. And certainly he has done his part nobly in putting forward that principle in its fairest aspect. He tells us he does not want help, but he wishes us to secure him fair play. We say we wish fair play to him and all others struggling for what they hold to be their rights. Is not such a man, then, to have our sympathies? Are we to let him be slaughtered here by the *Times*, and stand silently by whilst worse than Turks are assassinating him morally? No; you are not the man to say so. But then you are afraid that others will push our doctrines to the point of physical force. Even if they do, that is no reason why we should cease to give moral power its only chance, by boldly proclaiming the right and justice of the Hungarians to settle their own domestic affairs. Now I am satisfied that if public opinion in England can be shown to be unmistakably against Russian invasion of Hungary, the Russian Government would no more think of risking a collision with the two most powerful maritime States, than Tuscany or Sardinia would; for she is, if possible, more at the mercy of those Powers.

1851. Æt. 47. Therefore, to avoid the possibility of war, let us give the fullest development and expression to sound public opinion.

"My own opinion is that we are on the eve of a revolution in the diplomatic world; that the old régime of mystification and innuendo and intrigue cannot survive the growth of the democratic principle; that diplomacy must be a public and responsible organization; and nobly again has Kossuth assailed this stronghold of the hierarchical spirit. What could be better than when he said, 'Diplomacy tells us that the dinner is prepared and eaten, and we (the people) have nothing to do but to digest the consequences'? Then, again, his attacks upon the loaning system are quite in our spirit. In fact he comes here preaching the main principles enunciated at our Peace Congress, but preaching them better even in a foreign tongue than I could do in my own language; and surely such a man ought not to be slighted, although some of his admirers talk a little gunpowder.

"But the fact is that upon the whole the public addresses and speeches are singularly judicious, with the exception of the London Working Men's address, with which, of course, the working men had nothing to do. I join you heartily in wishing to guard us against being for a moment thought to be the advocates of war or armed intervention, and am equally convinced with yourself that we have nothing to hope from Palmerston and Co. One of my reasons for hoping much from Kossuth's agitation here and in America is that it will tend to unveil Foreign Ministers and put Foreign Offices in order.

"By the way, with reference to your difficulties about speaking, I should expect that Kossuth will

1851.
ÆT. 47.

prefer that nobody speaks but himself. After having such a rule adopted by the London Working Men's Committee, it would be invidious to depart from it in Manchester. I know it is his wish that nobody speaks in his presence unless he is the guest of the Chairman, as at Southampton. So if you like to suggest to the Committee that Kossuth should receive addresses and make a reply, and that nobody else should speak, I know that would be most agreeable to him."

"*Dunford, Nov.* 13. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I have only time for a few words to save the post after reading your speech, to say how greatly I admire your sentiments and approve the line of argument you took at the great Kossuth meeting. I can fully appreciate the difficulties of a peace man standing before such a meeting, full of the most generous indignation at the oppressors of a people so nobly represented by the great Magyar. If you could have moved there and then a declaration of war against Russia and Austria, it would have perhaps been the resolution which would have most perfectly embodied the feelings of three-fourths of those present. But your remarks will bear the test of time and reflection, which I should think would hardly be the case with the rev. gentlemen who fell foul of your peace principles. By the way, if I rightly understand what Dr. Vaughan said, he took credit for Palmerston for having prevented the Sultan from surrendering Kossuth by promising him material help. Now, you will find on referring to Palmerston's speech on Roebuck's Greek Debate, that in speaking of the entry of our fleet into the Dardanelles, he himself informed us that the Emperor of Russia withdrew his demand for the extradition of the Refugees on the arrival of the Sultan's envoy remonstrating against the demand, and *before any*

1851. Æt. 47.

intelligence had reached Petersburgh of the views of the English Government. But I remember at the time making the calculation, and finding that the newspapers of London and Paris, giving one unanimous expression, from all parties and every shade of opinion, of indignation at the attempt of the northern powers to violate the law of nations in the persons of Kossuth and his companions, reached Petersburgh at the same time with the Turkish envoy, and I felt convinced, and I said as much in the House afterwards, that it was that expression of OPINION from Western Europe scared the despots instantly from their prey. And you are quite right; it is opinion and opinion only that is wanting to establish the principle of non-intervention as a law of nations, as absolutely as the political refugee in a third and neutral country is protected now by the law of nations. But these people who bawl for soldiers and sailors to settle these matters, forget that we have a great deal to do to settle opinion amongst ourselves before we go to war to make others conform to a principle which we have not yet agreed upon. Was public opinion in England unanimously expressed against Russian intervention in 1849? Turn back to the columns of the *Times* and *Manchester Guardian* for an answer. . . .

"I know that Kossuth was most indignant on reading the blue-books (at Kutayah) giving the correspondence about the Hungarian struggle, for Pulsky told me at the time that K. had discovered to his surprise that the whole moral force of our diplomacy at Vienna was employed against him, and that Palmerston at the close of the struggle wrote to congratulate the Austrian Government upon the termination of the war. . . ."

"*Nov.* 16. (*To Mr. Ashworth.*)—Kossuth is most

1851.
ÆT. 47.

certainly a phenomenon; not only is he the first orator of the age, but he combines the rare attributes of a first-rate administrator, high moral qualities, and unswerving courage. This is more than can be said of Demosthenes or Cicero. I am glad to see by your letter that you have participated in the pleasure of listening to him. I confess I felt intensely interested in the success of his visit, after the base and brutal attempt of the *Times* to destroy his character, before even he had alighted on our shores. The generous welcome given to him is, I believe, not altogether undue to the dastardly attacks made on him by that paper, which has received a lesson not easily to be forgotten or forgiven. The tone of the addresses and speeches delivered at the meetings has been very discreet and moderate. There has been some gunpowder vomited forth, particularly by a reverend gentleman in Manchester, which might have been better spared for a fitter occasion. What we want is a sounder public opinion upon the question of national rights and the sovereignty of peoples. If we could make up our own minds, as a community, that the Russian intervention in Hungary was a violation of the independence of a nation, we should not require to threaten war to make our opinion influential. But what *were* the facts, and what *are* now the facts? At the time when the Czar moved his army across the Carpathians, not only were we not agreed as a people in condemning the act, but the *Times*, *Guardian*, and all the Tory papers, took a view of the intervention favourable to Russia. Even Lord Palmerston, in the House, spoke apologetically of it. And even now the *Times* leans to the same side. The whole of the Tory party and the aristocracy are holding aloof from the Kossuth demonstration. It is clear that we want

1851. Æt. 47.

an enlightened and reformed opinion upon the subject of non-intervention. Kossuth has done much to change the tone, and I think if 1849 had now to be gone through again, there would be such a demonstration of opinion as would scare Nicholas from his prey. But there is still very much to be done, and I can imagine nothing more calculated to retard the progress of sound public opinion than to invite the people to embark in a fresh war in favour of Hungarian liberty."

CHAPTER XXII

THE PROTECTIONISTS IN OFFICE

1852.
Æt. 48.

The signal victory which Lord Palmerston had gained in the summer of 1850, was followed before the close of the following year by what looked to everybody but himself like a crushing repulse. His rapid and peremptory way of doing the business of his office had never been agreeable to the Court. The substantial aims of his policy had been in most instances extremely disagreeable to some of the Continental personages with whom the English Court was on terms more or less close. In these high quarters, therefore, he was no favourite. At the very moment of his triumph, the Queen transmitted to him a rebuke for neglect of consideration and observance towards the Crown, so sharply worded that when it became public, men looked upon it as an affront not to be borne, and wondered that a Minister of Lord Palmerston's spirit should not have met it by instant resignation. He did not take this course, because, in his own words, to have resigned then would have been to give the fruits of victory to adversaries whom he had defeated, and to abandon his supporters at the very moment when by their means he had just triumphed. It was not long, however, before he rashly gave his enemies their opportunity. When the President of the French

1852. Æt. 48. Republic struck his blow against the Assembly, Lord Palmerston thought that he had done what was right and expedient, and frankly said as much in talking to the French Ambassador in London. Reference was made to the conversation in an official despatch from Paris. The despatch came in due course before the Queen and the Prime Minister. It was conceived that Lord Palmerston's expression of opinion on the President's action, before consultation with his colleagues, was a violation of prudence and decorum which showed him to be unfit for his post. Lord John Russell in a summary manner dismissed him from office; and in the debate which afterwards took place upon the matter in the House of Commons, was generally held at the time to have amply justified the dismissal. Hasty observers made up their minds that Lord Palmerston's career was at an end.

Lord Palmerston himself took a very different view. He reckoned confidently that the nation would not forget his power in foreign affairs. He knew that it did him more good than harm to figure as the victim of the Germanism of the Court. He saw that the press of the country was almost boisterously on his side. Finally, he perceived like everybody else that the Ministry could not get through the session, and would probably not stand long after the meeting of Parliament.[1] His opportunity came within a few days. He had his tit-for-tat with John Russell—so he wrote—and turned him out by carrying an amendment in the Militia Bill, which the Minister took as a vote of want of confidence. Lord John Russell immediately resigned (February 23), and the first administration of the Earl of Derby took the place of the last administration of pure Whigs.

[1] See Mr. Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. 218.

1852.
ÆT. 48.

In Cobden's eyes the policy of the Militia Bill, and the accession to power of the Protectionists, were equally startling and equally ill-omened. One event certainly showed a revival of the military spirit, and the other for some time was seriously believed to threaten a reaction against Free Trade. Cobden made a vigorous speech against the proposal for organizing the militia, contending that we should be amply protected by our navy, if our ships were not systematically sent abroad. He denied the reasonable probability of invasion, appealing to Lord John Russell's emphatic declaration on the first night of the session, that the relations of peace existed between this country and foreign nations in the fullest degree. Why should we suddenly act as if a remote and highly improbable contingency were an assured certainty? This point of view was not agreeable to the majority, and all that Cobden took by his protest was the assurance from a member on his own side that he was labouring under a monomania which deprived the country of the services of a very clever man. Cobden knew very well what price he and his friends might expect to pay for standing aloof from either of the two great factions, and refusing to echo the conventional cries of the political market-place. In the course of the previous year he had told a great meeting of Liberals at Manchester how he stood. Spiteful newspapers had begun to talk of him as a disappointed demagogue. "This disappointed demagogue," he said, "wants no public employment; if I did, I might have had it before now. I want no favour and no title. I want nothing that any Government or any party can give me; and if I am in the House of Commons at all, it is to give my feeble aid to the advancement of certain questions on which I have strong con-

1852. victions." If they deprived him of this power, if they told him not to do this because it was likely to destroy a Government with which he could have little sympathy, then the sooner he betook himself to something more profitable than sitting up in the House of Commons night after night, the better both for himself and his friends.[1]

ÆT. 48.

If Cobden found little support from either the House of Commons or the country for his opinions on war and armaments, he was compensated in part by finding that upon Free Trade at any rate there was no backsliding in either the press or the constituencies. The new Government professed to leave the question of Protection open until it should be convenient to appeal to the country. This made it impossible for the Free Traders to do anything but oppose them. If the Ministers were not for a Corn Law, Mr. Bright told them, let them say so. If one of them were authorized boldly to avow that the time had gone by when any duty could be imposed upon corn, and to promise that they would not tamper with the taxation with a view to compensate certain classes for losses alleged to be due to Free Trade, then the Government should certainly never find him voting a want of confidence in them. The same rather bitter but perfectly intelligible indifference of the Manchester school to the ties which nominally connected them with the official world, shows itself pretty clearly in Cobden's letters during this long crisis:—

"*House of Commons, Feb.* 28. (*To George Wilson.*) —Whilst I am writing, Stanley [Lord Derby] is still speaking, but from what I hear, his plan is to hold the Corn question in suspense, on the plea of other grave Parliamentary affairs, and admitting himself in

[1] Manchester, Feb. 23, 1851.

1852.
ÆT. 48.

a minority in the Commons, to do nothing unless forced to a dissolution by what he calls a factious opposition. The House of Commons is always afraid of a dissolution, and this threat may not be without its influences on Members. But it appears to me that our course is clear. We must not allow the country to be kept, both in its agricultural and manufacturing interests, in hot water and confusion for a year. We must challenge to instant combat, and memorialize the Queen from all parts of the country to dissolve. This will give courage and confidence to our friends, and prevent the Members of the House from temporizing. We have everything to fear from delay. Popular enthusiasm cools, and the enemy being in power will be sharpening the sword with which to slay us as soon as we are off guard. Let no other question be mixed up with ours. The country will not entertain other reforms until our question is disposed of."

"*London, Feb.* 28. (*To George Wilson.*)—Further reflection, and the perusal of Lord Derby's speech, have confirmed me in my views. We must go for memorials to the Queen for a dissolution. We must mix up no other question with it, because no other will interest the public till it is settled. We may talk of Reform in Parliament, but I would have no resolution excepting upon our own question. There should be one resolution affirming our determination to renew the League agitation, if necessary to maintain Free Trade inviolate; and another expressing the wish of the meeting for the interests of all concerned, to have the question for ever settled by an appeal to the country, and therefore praying the Queen to dissolve as soon as the forms of Parliament admit. I have my doubts yet, whether Lord Derby will dare to go to the country on the bread

1852. Æt. 48.

question; but if he should, he will find nine-tenths of the men, women, and children even in the rural districts dead against him. There is no doubt as to the result of a dissolution. Free Trade is stronger in the agricultural districts amongst the mass of the people, than you perhaps imagine in Manchester. There need not be too much sound and fury in our proceedings. The very apparition of the League will settle the question. In fact it is the only thing that all parties at headquarters are afraid of."

A couple of days after this letter, the Council of the League met in their old quarters at Manchester. Crowds from all parts of the country thronged into the great room of Newall's Buildings, and as one familiar face after another was recognized, the assembly became almost as animated as when the great struggle was at its height. Cobden moved the first resolution in a terse and pithy speech, Mr. Bright and Mr. Gibson followed, and before the meeting was over, the men in the room thoroughly understood one another and what was to be done; a large sum of money had been subscribed; and the plan of the electoral campaign had been determined upon and prepared.[1]

[1] Cobden usually tried to get one salient fact into a speech. On this occasion he mentioned a fact that he described as comprising almost their main case:—"Since the day when we laid down our arms there has been imported into this country in grain and flour of all kinds an amount of human subsistence equal to upwards of 50,000,000 of quarters of grain—a larger quantity than had been imported from foreign countries during the thirty-one years preceding 1846—that is, from the peace of 1815 down to the time at which we brought our labours to a close. Now, gentlemen, in that one fact is comprised our case. You have had, at the lowest computation, 5,000,000 of your countrymen, or countrywomen, or children, subsisting on the corn that has been brought from foreign countries. And what does that say? What does it say of the comfort you have brought to the homes of those families? What does it say of the peace and prosperity and security of

1852.
ÆT. 48.

"*Manchester, March* 3. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—The meeting was all I could wish in point of influence, numbers, and earnestness. But it struck me that people with difficulty realise in their minds the necessity of another effort to secure Free Trade. However, the blow will, I expect, tell decisively."

"*March* 5. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—The feeling in the West Riding of Yorkshire is most intense amongst the working class. They will never allow the Corn Law to be reimposed."

"*London, March* 11. (*To Mr. Sturge.*)—I am not sure that I correctly interpret your letter to mean that you prefer to let Lord Derby remain in office for fear of seeing back the Whigs. My object is to settle the Free Trade question for ever, and to clear the ground for other questions. If in doing so, I should be instrumental in bringing back the Whigs it would not be my fault. I have no such object in view, and agree with you in wishing they could remain in Opposition for the rest of their lives—or at least to the day of their reformation. Let us not, however, deceive ourselves by supposing that Lord Derby would be less inclined for the Militia than the Whigs. All the aristocratic parties and the Court are in favour of more armaments. Our business is to try to make the people of a different opinion; and when I say the people, I mean that public opinion which alone can enable us to break down the martial propensities of the Government. I am more and more convinced that we have much to do with the public, before we can with any sense or usefulness quarrel with this or that aristocratic party.

domestic life in those homes, where 50,000,000 of quarters of grain extra have been introduced, and where, but for your exertions, the inmates might have been left either in hopeless penury or subsisting on potatoes?"

1852. ÆT. 48.

"I have watched naturally the tone of the press upon the late (as I think monstrous) proposal to increase our armaments. It is decidedly against us. I do not speak of the dailies, but of the weekly papers; and I do not allude to such papers as the *Examiner* or *Spectator*, but to the *Weekly Dispatch*, read by artisans and small shopkeepers, and the *Illustrated Weekly News*, a thorough middle-class print. By these and such as these I have been denounced and put out of the pale of practical statesmanship for opposing an increase of armaments. I care nothing for this, because I prefer to enjoy the pleasure of advocating my own views to the prospects of office. But how many public men who have ambition to gratify will range themselves alongside of us, so long as the press is thus opposed to them? To change the press, we must change public opinion. And, mind, when I speak of the press I speak of those weekly papers which are really supported by the people.

"Never was the military spirit half so rampant in this country since the Peace as at present. Look at the late news from Rangoon.[1] Nobody inquires *why* we killed 300 Burmese. The papers applaud the deed without asking for a justification. This makes about 5400 persons killed by our ships in the East during the last five years, without our having lost one man by the butcheries! Now give me Free Trade as the recognized policy of all parties in this country, and I will find the best possible argument against these marauding atrocities. I will then demonstrate to all by their own admission that they cannot profit by such proceedings. To take away the

[1] This was the beginning of the Second Burmese War, which Cobden dealt with in the following year in his pamphlet, *How Wars are got up in India*. See *Collected Writings*, vol. ii.

1852.
ÆT. 48.

motive of self-interest is, after all, the nearest way to influence the conduct of wicked human nature. *Therefore*, as the moral of this, I exhort you to give the finishing-stroke to Free Trade as the best means of advancing your peace principles."

"*March* 20. (*To J. Sturge.*)—As you will have seen by Lord Derby's speech in the Lords, the present Government will carry a Militia Bill if they can. It is the question upon which they will try to raise a discussion in the House with a view to gain time. And Lord John Russell and his party are so hampered with pledges upon the subject, that they cannot offer any opposition to at least an introduction of the measure. Therefore you must not relax in your efforts to prevent the scheme from being carried out. The invasion panic seems pretty nearly forgotten."

"*London, March* 20. (*To George Wilson.*)— . . . The Derby-Disraelites are not going to give up their berths in a hurry, and they would be fools if they did so, for they are opposed to an Opposition whose leaders have not the pluck (and Dizzy's insolence shows that he knows it) to stop the supplies. I have been in constant communication with Lord John and Graham, but they are not the men to strike the blow, and we are powerless without them. The excuse they put forward is the fear that some of the Peel party and Palmerston will not join in a vote of want of confidence—such as limiting the supplies, and that we might be in a minority. I have urged upon them again and again that promptness and courage will carry everybody with them—that the members on our side of the House will for the sake of their elections vote for the Free Trade majority. But timidity carries the day. And so I suppose these men will be in office till November. In the mean-

1852. Æt. 48.

time they will get rid of their Protectionist pledges, and try to reconstruct a Tory party—and as we, the present Opposition, are a rope of sand with an Irish party pledged against the Whigs, I see no reason why Derby should not have a fresh lease upon a Free Trade policy. Gladstone, Goulburn, Sidney Herbert, Palmerston, have more affinity for the Tories than for us, and nothing but Free Trade keeps us on the same benches. True, there will be one difficulty in the way of their making a party. What could they do with Disraeli, if Gladstone were on the same bench?

"There is now no doubt that the Protectionists are slipping away from their principles at a gallop, and we shall be in danger of wasting our strength in firing ball cartridges at a dead lion."

"*London, March* 23. (*To George Wilson.*)—I have done all I possibly could with Lord John to induce him to act with more vigour. He is hampered with pledges and opinions given or expressed to the Queen or Lord Derby when he went out of office, which prevent him from taking a leading part in advocating an immediate dissolution of Parliament. And yet, as you will have seen, he is in no way inclined to let anybody else lead our side of the House.

"I have spoken in the same way to Sir James Graham, who has been in consultation with his colleagues of the late Peel party, and I have a long letter from him explaining why he thinks we must be content for the present with the declaration of Lord Derby. He fears that some of his party would not vote for limiting the supplies for the military services. But they still leave it open to deal with the miscellaneous estimates, if the Government should be inclined to postpone unreasonably the appeal to the country. Last night, owing to the rapidity with

which the money was voted there seemed to be an impression that we should dissolve early in May.

"What are you doing? You ought at once to make out a list of those places which are safe, and waste no attention or money on them. Then look to places like Sunderland, Liverpool, Lincoln, Boston, where there will be Protectionists standing, and there you ought to concentrate your strength by distribution of telling tracts and handbills. Not caricatures or poetry or sarcasm, but brief and pithy facts, for in those places people are not up to the mark. Pictorial tracts or handbills are good, but they should be pictorial facts, not caricatures."

"*May* 5. (*To J. Sturge.*)—I am not quite sure yet that we may not draw the sting from the Militia Bill, and make it so different a thing in Committee that its author may repudiate it. It is thought that the present Government is vexed at having to carry the measure through, and they will be far more sick of it before we have done with them. Last night, or rather this morning at one o'clock, in the heat of the strife Disraeli was drawn into another Protectionist avowal, which will embarrass him again. In fact the Militia Bill seems destined to bring no end of trouble upon all Governments who meddle with it, and we shall do our best to make the present Ministers sick of their adopted child. It is the wretched Whigs alone who render such bad measures possible. But Lord John seems to have paid an ample penalty."

"*June* 9. (*To J. Sturge.*)—I admire your hopefulness, and must confess myself to be much disgusted and almost dismayed at the proceedings on the Militia Bill. I will never forgive the Whigs for this retrograde step. On analysing the division list, I

1852. ÆT. 48.

find that in almost every case, where it was possible to bring public opinion to bear upon members, your party succeeded in preventing them from supporting the third reading. The majority was made up of county members (chiefly Protectionists) and the representatives of small pocket boroughs. This shows that if we had a fair representation, you could hold the military party in check. But you can do nothing without a change in the county representation, and there is no county that sends such bad members as that where you live."

The elections for a new Parliament extended over the month of July. Cobden and his Conservative colleague again divided the representation of the West Riding without a contest. Mr. Gibson and Mr. Bright won at Manchester by handsome majorities. Taken broadly the strength of parties had not shifted, and there was no approach to such a change as would have justified a reversal of the policy of Free Trade. The Government gained strength enough to resist a vote of want of confidence, if it should be proposed, but not strength enough to carry their measures. What shrewd observers like Lord Palmerston expected was that they would be beaten upon some fanciful scheme for relieving everybody without increasing anybody's burdens, "which would be speedily seen to be too mountebankish to be practicable."[1] This is what actually happened. Meanwhile Cobden and his friends did not relax their vigilance.

"*Midhurst, August* 18. (*To George Wilson.*)—If you have money in hand, would it not be well to keep it until we have fairly disposed of the Protectionist party? The Government ought to be driven to avow Free Trade opinions, or be driven

[1] Lord Palmerston, in Mr. Ashley's *Life*, ii. 247, 248.

1852.
ÆT. 48.

from office. It will not be easy to do either, unless the League still shows a formidable front to all trimmers. We must not abandon the field whilst professing Protectionists hold office. The Government will be in a difficulty how to change their Protectionist garments for a Free Trade suit without breaking up their party. But our object is or ought to be to break up the county gang, which exists only upon the basis of Protection. Do not therefore throw away your balance, but keep it and let the world know that you have it."

"*Midhurst, Sept.* 14, 1852. (*To Mr. Sturge.*)—I hold, that before you can rationally hope to reduce the army or the navy, you must bring the public mind to agree to the abolition of the militia. And I should also, with all due deference, say, that until we can recover this lost ground for the Peace party in England, it will be a little inconsistent in us to travel abroad to teach our doctrines to other nations. The establishment of the militia was a disastrous defeat sustained by the Peace party, and until we can regain our position of 1851, it is useless to think of getting back to 1835. How are we to take this step and thus recover our lost position? I repeat by acquiring some influence in the counties, for it was by the votes of county members in opposition to a majority of the representatives of boroughs that the measure was passed. And if you have watched the announcements in the *Gazette* since the passing of the law, you must have seen the sinister influences which were at work to carry the Bill. Have you marked the shoal of deputy-lieutenants created as a part of the working machinery of the law? Every magistrate almost in these parts has been gazetted as a deputy-lieutenant, and is of course entitled to appear at Court with his official costume and cocked

1852. Æt. 48.

hat and feathers. Then have you observed the lists of appointments and promotions as officers of the militia? There is quite a flood of flunkeyism and patronage in the counties. Lords-Lieutenant are looking patronizingly upon the Squire; and the Squire's son is snobbishly looking up to his Lordship for a grade in the county militia. Then there is all the small patronage for printers, surgeons, lawyers, etc., with its necessary consequence of servility and demoralization on the part of all interested. The whole of the working of the militia is calculated to foster and strengthen an aristocratic system and to degrade the mass of the people."

"*Sept.* 20. (*To Mr. Sturge.*)—The death of the Duke[1] would, one thinks, tend to weaken the military party. But, if the spirit survive, it will find its champions. After all, if the country will do such work as Wellington was called on to perform, I don't know that it could find a more honest instrument. He hated jobs and spoke the truth (the very opposite of Marlborough), and although he grew rich in the service, it was by the voluntary contributions of the Parliament and Government. If he had been told to help himself at the Exchequer, his modesty and honesty would never have allowed him to take as much as was forced upon him. I, who saw with what frenzy of admiration he was welcomed by all classes at the Exhibition, can never honestly admit that in what the Legislature and Government had done for him, they had exceeded the wishes of the nation. Let us hope that a more rational sentiment may be promoted amongst us, but we are slow to learn. At this moment we are doing more than any other people to keep up the vast peace armaments of which we complain. . . . Can you in the face of

[1] The Duke of Wellington died on the 14th of September.

1852.
ÆT. 48.

such facts travel to the Continent to advocate a reduction of establishments?"

"*Midhurst, October* 4. (*To G. Wilson.*)—It having been decided to hold a meeting,[1] there is nothing more to be said but to make the best of it. I think you are quite right in having determined to mix nothing with the Free Trade question. . . . All the reflection I can give to the subject confirms me in the opinion that we ought to confine ourselves in the first instance to the settlement of the Free Trade question, without attempting to tie to that proceeding any ulterior plan whether of a personal or political nature. We are entitled to at least a Free Trade Government to represent the opinion of the country. If the present Administration do not avow themselves to have cast off their Protectionist opinions and to have adopted Free Trade views, they ought to be turned out. I would not be contented by their saying that they will not attempt to reverse the policy of Sir R. Peel 'because they have not the power to do so.' They must profess adhesion to that policy and recant their own errors; they must promise to promote and extend these principles; and failing in all this, we must by any legitimate means drive them into resignation. Can we do this? All depends upon the course taken by the Peel party, and I am glad to see by the tone of Henley's speech that the old bitterness of the Protectionists towards them still survives. Indeed, so long as Disraeli continues at the head of the Tory party, I do not see how Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, and the rest of Peel's followers can ever rejoin them. But much depends upon the League pursuing an honest course. We must not look to the right or left, but as of old go

[1] A great meeting of the League party in Manchester, in opposition to the Derby-Disraeli ministry.

1852. Æt. 48.

with a single purpose to our object. We must not allow ourselves to be used by the Whigs or Peelites, but hold the balance fairly between them."

Parliament met on the 4th of November, but it was the 11th before the preliminary formalities were over. The Queen's Speech contained a paragraph of a very oblique kind on the question which was uppermost in everybody's mind. If Parliament was of opinion that recent legislation had contributed to the improved condition of the country, and yet had at the same time inflicted injury on important interests, then it was recommended by the Queen to consider how far it was practicable to mitigate the injury, and to enable the country to meet unrestricted competition. Writing to his wife on the day after the debate on the Address, Cobden says,—"We had a queer tricky allusion to the Free Trade question in the Queen's Speech, which brought on a sharp attack upon the Government last night, and as all parties are agreed to force the Disraelites, I hope we shall bring matters to an end soon. It is time we were done with the question."

The process, however, took a little time, and was attended with some difficulties. "I am sorry to say," Cobden wrote a few days later (November 18), "I think it is quite impossible under any circumstances that I can be released before the 10th December. If even the Government were upset, there would still be certain things to be done which would take till that time. This has been luckily a very fine day. I have not been near the line of procession.[1] But Sale and Henry Ashworth have both called since it was over, and they think people are disappointed. It is the last piece of paganism of the kind that will ever be performed in this

[1] The Duke of Wellington's funeral.

country, for I hear everybody in private in the House (even Tories) condemn it. But nobody dares to speak out in public. 1852. ÆT. 48.

"You will see by the paper that on Thursday Dizzy is to move an amendment to Villiers's address. Altogether, what with this inconsistent declaration of Free Trade principles coming from their own party, and this escapade of Disraeli's on moving the address for Wellington's funeral,[1] the Protectionist party is very much demoralized, and will, I think, be broken up in a week or two. They never can hold together, for a score or two of honest, stupid people will still hold out, and in fact will be in a more creditable plight than in going over with the herd."

"*Nov.* 24.—We have a fresh complication in the House, owing to Palmerston having played us a trick in moving a new amendment. The Whigs are very indignant, and the Liberals are now confessing that *we* found him out some years ago, and they now call him a traitor and worse. It is impossible to say how matters will go."

The story of these final manœuvres need not detain us. It was indispensable to pin the Ministers to an explicit acceptance of the policy of Free Trade. The Ministers were willing to give the required pledge, but they sought to escape the humiliation of a formal confession that the legislation which they had resisted with an obstinacy and

[1] Mr. Disraeli in his funeral oration on the Duke introduced bodily a passage from a panegyric delivered by M. Thiers many years before on Marshal Gouvion de Saint Cyr. It had already appeared in an article in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1848; but the writer, a brilliant man well known in society, came forward to say that it was Mr. Disraeli who had called his attention to the passage from Thiers. The "escapade" was singular and it was certainly unfortunate, but men of letters, who know the tricks that memory is capable of playing, will hardly think it incapable of fair explanation.

1852. ÆT. 48.

a rancour unsurpassed in political history, had been wise, just, and beneficial. These were the "three odious epithets," as Mr. Disraeli styled them, with which Mr. Villiers asked the House by their resolution to stamp the Act of 1846. To call the policy just was particularly unpalatable, because if it was just, then what wrong was left for compensation? Mr. Disraeli deprecated this revival of the cries of exhausted factions and obsolete politics. He proposed a resolution which, while acknowledging the effect of recent legislation in cheapening provisions, and binding the Government unreservedly to adhere to the policy of unrestricted competition, still contained no declaration that the opinions of the Protectionist party had been mistaken or had undergone any change. The whole question turned upon the way in which the national verdict was to be worded. Was this solemn final declaration to be drawn up, Mr. Bright asked, by one who had repudiated Free Trade as Mr. Disraeli had done, or by one who had consistently supported it as Mr. Villiers had done? The question was not an idle point of etiquette. A majority of the friends of the Government no farther back than the recent elections had openly declared either for a reversal of Sir Robert Peel's policy, or for compensation — the word that never fails to come into our ears when a favoured order is stripped of some unjust and mischievous privilege. Under these circumstances, ought the House to tolerate any evasion?

This was a manly statement of the case. The interests of political morality demanded that the Protectionists should either be forced publicly to recant an error which they had upheld with so much stupidity and so much virulence, and in some cases with such unscrupulous hypocrisy and want of

principle, or else that on this issue, and no other, they should be driven from power. But the complex play of party combinations seldom permits these plain and unsophisticated courses. It did not suit Lord Palmerston that the Government should be turned out too soon. His plans for the succession were not ripe. A hurried crisis might make Lord John Russell again Prime Minister, and under him Lord Palmerston was resolved not to serve. A little more time was needed to clear this up, and accordingly with a view of saving the Ministry from a repulse which would for his purposes have been premature, Lord Palmerston suggested a third form of resolution which would content Liberals, and which Protectionists might swallow. It became evident that this would meet the wishes of important sections of the House, always ready to be captivated by anything that wears the air of moderation and compromise. Mr. Disraeli perceived that he was saved, and withdrew his own amendment in favour of Lord Palmerston's. Cobden now made his first direct attack on Lord Palmerston, and he made it in very straightforward terms. But in the long-run Mr. Villiers's motion was rejected by a majority of eighty, and then Lord Palmerston's was carried by a majority of four hundred and fifteen.

1852. ÆT. 48.

The field was now clear for Mr. Disraeli's Budget. It had been awaited with eager expectation. The Government was without weight, but it was not unpopular. There was no general anxiety to see the Whigs back again. A miracle of financial talent might still save the Ministry, though it had neither political principles nor administrative experience. There was a vivid curiosity of a personal and dramatic kind. Men wondered how the skilful gladiator would acquit himself, who had never been

1852. Æt. 48. in office until he was made leader of the House of Commons. In a few hours after Mr. Disraeli had stated his plans, it seemed as if they were a success. One thing at any rate was clear; Free Trade was safe. "The Budget," Cobden wrote to Mr. George Wilson, the day after Mr. Disraeli's speech (December 4), "has finally closed the controversy with Protection. Dizzy has in the most impudent way thrown over the 'local burdens,' as he did before a fixed duty.[1] The League may be dissolved when you like."

When the discussion on the ministerial proposals opened a week later, it was at once seen that the first favourable impression had been a mistake, and that they could not stand the heavy fire which was now opened upon them by all the ablest and most experienced men in the House. All Mr. Disraeli's energy, self-possession, and resource were no match in defending a plan that was hollow and vicious in itself, against the forces that were now combined to overthrow him. Among other shifts, he conceived the idea of detaching the Manchester party from the Whigs and the Peelites. He asked one of their leaders to call upon him. "Protection," he said to the illustrious Free Trader, "is done with. That quarrel is at an end. If you turn us out, you will only have the Whigs in. And what have the Whigs done for you? They will never do anything for you." As a matter of fact Lord Palmerston's manœuvre had made the Free Traders even less friendly to the Whigs than they had been before.

[1] When the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that he was not going to recommend any change whatever in the system of raising the local taxes, a good deal of loud and derisive triumph was exhibited on the other side. "Oh," said Mr. Disraeli with composure, "there are greater subjects for us to consider than the triumph of obsolete opinions."

1852.
ÆT. 48.

But it was impossible that Economic Liberals could support a Budget so fantastic and unsound. It proposed to repeal the malt-tax to please the farmers, and then to reimburse the exchequer by an increase of the house-tax, which was of course chiefly payable in the towns. "We don't want the Whigs to give us office," said Mr. Disraeli's visitor. "We don't think of that. In any case, we cannot support the new house-tax. And there are other things in your Budget which we think wrong." So the interview came to an end. Cobden spoke against the ministerial plan in the course of the debate, but apparently with rather less power than usual. Mr. Disraeli wound up a vehement defence of himself by an invective against political coalitions. He had himself, it is true, a few days before been a party to an attempt to coalesce with Lord Palmerston. But nothing could save him against the union of Whigs, Peelites, and Economic Liberals, and he was beaten by a majority of nineteen. The next day Lord Derby resigned (December 17), and the Aberdeen Administration was formed. The long-deferred fusion took place between the chief followers of Sir Robert Peel and their old adversaries. Philosophic Radicalism was represented in the Cabinet by Sir William Molesworth. The economic Radicalism of Cobden and his friends was left out, as Mr. Disraeli had foretold. The time speedily came when Cobden was driven to say that he never repented so much of a vote in his life as of that which he had now just given.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PANIC OF 1853

1852. Æt. 48.

Some have noticed it as an odd coincidence that the voting for the Second Empire took place three days after the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. We might picture to ourselves, said Cobden, the third Napoleon rising from the yet open tomb of the vanquisher of the first. That event of sinister omen for France naturally roused considerable disquiet in England. But what had been a natural disquiet was exaggerated by the press and a certain influential class of politicians into a fit of angry and violent alarm. The massacre of unarmed citizens on the boulevards with which Louis Napoleon had cowed Paris and sealed his usurpation, had filled England with a just and righteous horror. But from reprobation of this deed of bloodshed to an invasion panic, there ought to have been a long step. Statesmen at least, whether journalists or actors in politics, might have been expected to abstain from flogging the public mind into a state of furious apprehension. Especially is this true of statesmen who, like Lord Palmerston, had been the first in the Days of December to applaud the President for tearing up the Constitution and throwing the national representatives into prison. Lord Palmerston, however, who, notwithstanding his astuteness and his high

1852.
ÆT. 48.

spirits, had a strong dash of honest stupidity in his composition, had got it into his head that steamships had thrown a bridge across the British Channel. It was now perfectly possible, he said, that all England might waken up some morning to find that 50,000 Frenchmen had landed on her shores in the course of the previous night. It was in vain that military and naval authorities demonstrated the physical impossibility of this electric suddenness of invasion. It was in vain that statesmen like Sir Robert Peel had asked the House to figure to itself the surprise with which Lord Palmerston himself, sitting in Downing Street with all the threads of European diplomacy concentrated like so many telegraphic wires in his cabinet, would hear that on that day fortnight 150,000 men were to be landed on the shores of Great Britain. Lord Palmerston held to his fixed idea. During Peel's Ministry he had so incessantly asked alarmist questions, that even Sir Robert himself began to think of a Militia Bill. Lord John Russell was no sooner in office than the same influence was brought to bear, and in due time led to the Militia Bill which incidentally brought his Ministry to an end. Lord Derby's first measure on taking his predecessor's place was to bring in another Militia Bill, and the energetic support which was given to it by Lord Palmerston was one of the chief secrets of its success.

The organization of the militia was followed on the erection of the French Empire by an increase in each branch of the two services. Every condition was present which, according to Cobden's diagnosis, favoured the growth of an invasion panic. The country was very prosperous. Under the influence of Free Trade and the gold discoveries, the exports had risen in five years from fifty to one hundred

1852. millions sterling per annum. The manufacturers were rolling in new opulence. The revenue was satisfactory. The country gentlemen found that they were not ruined after all, but, on the contrary, were getting better rents than ever. There was, moreover, a not unnatural reaction against the outburst of pacific and fraternal exaggerations to which the Great Exhibition had given rise. The death of the Duke of Wellington and the recapitulation in a thousand funeral orations of his splendid exploits, had turned men's minds to all the pomp and circumstance of war, to heroic campaigns, to glorious and crowning victories.

ÆT. 48.

When the nation is in the humour to indulge itself in the luxury of a panic, the mood never declines for lack of nourishment. The oracles of the military and naval clubs hurried to the *Times* with agitating communications. Every half-pay officer in the country had his own peculiar alarm and his own favourite plan. The counters of the booksellers were strewn with pamphlets like snowflakes, containing A Few Observations on Invasion, Brief Suggestions for a Reserve Force, Short Notes on National Defence, Plain Proposals for a Maritime Militia, Thoughts on the Peril of Portsmouth. Every morning a fresh and more terrible paragraph sent a thrill round the breakfast-table. There was a French plot to secure a naval station in the West Indies. General Changarnier had divulged a secret plan for seizing the metropolis. The French troops were tired of Rome, and were jealous of their share in the sack of London. The great shipbuilders on the Clyde had received an order for steam frigates from the French Government. A French man-of-war had actually appeared at Dover. It was to no purpose that each paragraph was demolished the

1852.
ÆT. 48.

very day after its publication. The Frenchman had been driven to Dover by stress of weather; General Changarnier said that his alleged plan was absolutely without foundation; the shipbuilders solemnly declared that no order for steam frigates had come into the Clyde. All this made no difference, and the panic ran its course. As Cobden justly said, nothing could surpass the childlike simplicity with which every absurd and improbable rumour was believed, unless it were the stolid scepticism with which all offers to demonstrate their falsehood were rejected.[1]

Cobden was proud to recall that he and his friends in face of this outcry took the part which had been taken by the great political leaders who addressed our forefathers half a century before, and who bore the most honoured names in the history of English Liberalism. Nothing pleased him better than to remind those who taunted him with his alliance with the Peace Society, that the Society of Friends co-operated with Mr. Fox in trying to prevent the war of 1793, and that Mr. Fox was not at all ashamed to write to Mr. Gurney, of Norwich, begging him to get up county meetings, and to send petitions whether from Quakers or others to the House of Commons. Cobden spent the autumn between the general election and the meeting of Parliament in turning over these things. His industrious meditations took shape in a pamphlet which he intended to do something to appease the perturbation of the popular spirit. Before he actually sat down to composition, he wrote an interesting letter to his friend, Mr. Thomasson, of Bolton:—

"*Midhurst*, *Sept.* 27.—The course pursued by Brougham and all the Whig party at the close of the war, in opposition to the large standing armaments

[1] See Cobden's account in his pamphlet, written in 1862, *The Three Panics. Political Writings*, ii. 235-270.

1852. ÆT. 48.

proposed to be maintained by the Tories, was precisely that which the Peace party are now taking in opposition to both Whigs and Tories. The former have since that time been in power, and there is perfect truth in the sarcasm that the Whigs are Tories in office, and the Tories are Whigs when out of office. But the misfortune is that, after having been in power and committed to all the bad measures of a Whig Government, the Whigs are rendered quite useless as an Opposition; and we have now arrived at that point that whether on the right or left hand side of the Speaker's chair, the Liberal party headed by the Whigs are incapable of doing any good for the country. But before you and I (men of peace as we are) find fault with the Whig chiefs, let us ask ourselves candidly whether the country at large is in favour of any other policy than that which has been pursued by the aristocracy, Whig and Tory, for the last century and a half? The man who impersonated that policy more than any other was the Duke of Wellington; and I had the daily opportunity of witnessing at the Great Exhibition last year that all other objects of interest sank to insignificance even in that collection of a world's wonders when he made his entry in the Crystal Palace. The frenzy of admiration and enthusiasm which took possession of a hundred thousand people of all classes at the very announcement of his name, was one of the most impressive lessons I ever had of the real tendencies of the English character. . . . The recent demonstration at the death of the Duke was in keeping with what I have described. Now what does all this imply but a war-spirit in the population? As for the claims of the old warrior to popularity as a statesman, they amount to this, that he resisted two reforms, Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill, until we were on the verge of rebellion, and yielded

1852.
ÆT. 48.

at last avowedly only to avoid civil war; and in a third case (repeal of the Corn Law) he gave in his acquiescence to Peel after his old policy had plunged one-half the kingdom into the horrors of plague, pestilence, and famine. No, depend upon it, the world never yet knew so warlike and aggressive a people as the British.

"I wish to see a map on Mercator's projection published, with a red spot to mark the places on sea and land where bloody battles have been fought by Englishmen. It would be found that, unlike every other people, we have during seven centuries been fighting with foreign enemies everywhere excepting on our own soil. Need another word be said to prove us the most aggressive race under the sun? The Duke's career is no exception to this rule. His victories in India were a page in those bloody annals for which God will assuredly exact a retribution from us or our children; and his triumphs on the Continent can never be truly said to have been achieved in defence of our own independence or liberty. His descent upon the Peninsula was made after Nelson had at the battle of Trafalgar destroyed Napoleon's power at sea. From that moment we were as safe from molestation in our island home, as if we had inhabited another planet. Yet from that time till the close of the war we spent four or five hundred millions sterling upon continental quarrels. 'Oh,' but say the flatterers of our national vain-gloriousness, 'we saved the liberties of Europe.' Precious liberties truly! Look at them from Cadiz to Moscow! The moral of all this is that we have to pull against wind and tide in trying to put down the warlike spirit of our countrymen. It must be done by showing them that their energies have been perverted to a disastrous course, so far as *their*

1853. Æt. 49.

interests are concerned, by a ruling class which has reaped all the honours and emoluments, while the nation inherits the burdens and responsibilities. Our modern history must be re-written."

The pamphlet in which he now engaged, "*1792 and 1853, in Three Letters*," was, in fact, a modest attempt on Cobden's own part to rewrite in his own way one very relevant episode of that modern history of which he speaks in his letter. He makes no pretence of an original historical inquiry into the sources of the war between England and France in 1793. What he does is to show, and he finds an easy task in showing from the speeches of leading members of the war Cabinet, as well as from the narratives of Tory historians like Scott and Alison, that the alleged grounds of the war were not the real motives either of the English Government or the English people. The French had opened the navigation of the Scheldt; they had invaded Holland; the Convention had passed the famous decree of fraternity, declaring in the name of the French nation that it would grant assistance to all peoples who should wish to recover their liberty, and charging the executive power to give the necessary orders to its generals. These were the three nominal grounds of quarrel. The real ground behind them all was the violent hatred which a conservative nation like the English inevitably felt towards the revolutionary policy of France. For the actual motives we must look to Burke's philippics, and not to Lord Grenville's despatches. But deep-rooted hatred can be no evidence that a war prompted by it is necessary or just; and as a matter of fact there are very few persons now alive who, having examined the records of English policy in 1793, do not condemn the war of that year as both impolitic and unnecessary. Cobden

would be justified by most modern students of the period in his contempt for the plea that the French were the first to declare war. It was manifest from the middle of December 1792, that the English Government intended to join the continental powers, and for the very plain reason, apart from the captivity and imminent death of the king, that France had shown herself more than their match. For a time it was believed that the Revolution had broken up the army and dispersed the resources of the country. It was expected that Prussia and Austria would find the restoration of the old system in France easy to accomplish. For so long the English Ministry looked with a certain complacency on events which promised finally to lower their natural rival, and to punish France for the aid and comfort that she had bestowed on the rebellion of the American colonies against Great Britain. 1853. ÆT. 49.

Of course if Cobden had professed to be writing a history of that momentous epoch, he would have had to take many circumstances into account which for his purpose at the moment might fairly be allowed to go for nothing. Chauvelin, for instance, was not so humble and innocent an emissary as Cobden's language might leave us to suppose; he was a coxcomb without either judgment or address. The success of the French arms, again, coming after a period of intense apprehension, nursed in the Convention an arrogant and overbearing spirit which would probably have made the maintenance of peace with even a less proud Government than that of Great Britain extremely difficult. What is clear is that it would have been well for England, and probably for Europe too, if the British Government had done their best to remain at peace with the new Republic. And what is equally clear is, as Cobden showed, that the British Government, when the crisis

1853. ÆT. 49.

came, so far from doing their best to remain at peace, hurried violently into war. The many elastic possibilities of history did not concern a writer whose pressing object was to demolish the opinion, which the feeling of the moment when Cobden wrote made so mischievous, that it was the restless and aggressive spirit of France which first provoked the great war that opened upon Europe in 1792. This task, as I have said, was tolerably easy, and nobody who has fully considered the circumstances of the Declaration of Pilnitz will deny that though there were political parties in France to whom the foreign war that was forced upon them was for domestic reasons not unwelcome, yet Cobden was strictly right in his thesis that the French Government had, in 1792, given no ground of offence to foreign nations. "It is impossible," Cobden breaks out, in the fulness and sincerity of his emotion, "to read the speeches of Fox at this time, without feeling one's heart yearn with admiration and gratitude for the bold and resolute manner in which he opposed the war, never yielding and never repining under the most discouraging defeats; and, although deserted by many of his friends in the House, taunted with having only a score of followers left, and obliged to admit that he could not walk the streets without being insulted by hearing the charge made against him of carrying on an improper correspondence with the enemy in France, yet bearing it all with uncomplaining manliness and dignity. The annals of Parliament do not record a nobler struggle in a nobler cause."

No part of the pamphlet was more likely to be useful than that in which Cobden explained to his countrymen that the French nation, instead of being ashamed of the Revolution, and envious of the social advancement of England, as we in the fatuousness of

national vanity used to persist in believing, do in fact cling to the work of 1789 with appreciation, thankfulness, and invincible tenacity; and that men of the most opposite opinions on every other subject, agree that to the Revolution in its normal phases France is indebted for a more rapid advance in civilization, wealth, and happiness, than was ever previously made by any community of a similar extent in the same period of time. No people, he went on, have ever clung with more unshaken staunchness to the essential principles and main objects of a Revolution than have the French. When you say that their new Emperor is absolute and his will omnipotent, remember that there are three things which even he dare not attempt to do. He dare not attempt to endow with land and tithes one sect as the exclusively paid religion of the State. He could not create a system of primogeniture and entail. And finally, he could not impose a tax on succession to personal property, and leave real property free. In England we have all three. "I am penning these pages," said Cobden, sitting in his little study at Dunford, "in a maritime county. Stretching from the sea, right across to the verge of the next county, and embracing great part of the parish in which I sit, are the estates of three proprietors, which extend in almost unbroken masses for upwards of twenty miles. The residence of one of them is surrounded with a walled park ten miles in circumference. Well, if Louis Napoleon were to create three such estates in France, it would be fatal to him. Tell the eight millions of landed proprietors in France that they shall exchange lots with the English people, where the labourer who cultivates the farm has no more proprietary interest in the soil than the horses he drives, and he will be stricken with horror."

1853. ÆT. 49.

All this was said, not to urge the land question,

1853. ÆT. 49.

but to press upon his countrymen the habit of which of all others they stand most in need, of learning to tolerate the feelings and predilections of other nations. "Let us spare our pity," he insisted, "where people are contented; and withhold our contempt from a nation who hold what they prize by the vigilant exercise of public opinion." What the Frenchman cherishes is equality; what the Englishman cherishes is personal liberty. The poorest cottager on any of the three estates that encircle Heyshott "feels that his personal liberty is sacred, and he cares little for equality. And here I will repeat," says Cobden, "that I would rather live in a country where this feeling in favour of individual freedom is jealously cherished, than be without it in the enjoyment of all the principles of the French Constituent Assembly." It is passages like this that help us to understand the secret of Cobden's position, and of his attraction. He was so much of an Englishman, while he strove to show how Englishmen might become more generous, more noble, and more just in their judgments on other nations.

His words about Louis Napoleon contained an admirable illustration of the same ever wholesome lesson:—"It is hardly necessary to declare that, were Louis Napoleon an Englishman, or I a Frenchman, however small a minority of opponents he might have, I should be one of them;—that is all I have to say in the matter; for anything more would in my opinion be mere impertinence towards the French people, who for reasons best known to themselves acquiesce in his rule." And as to the first and stronger Napoleon, the French feeling for his memory which had just been so strikingly manifested in the immense and spontaneous vote for the Empire of his nephew, became an intelligible sentiment in

1853.
ÆT. 49.

Cobden's pages, instead of remaining the wicked mania that it appeared to the majority of his countrymen. We, he said, who have just paid almost pagan honours to the remains of a general who fought the battles of the Coalition,—"what should we have done in honour of those soldiers who beat back from our frontiers confederate armies of literally every nation in Christian Europe, except Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland? Should we not, if we were Frenchmen, be greater worshippers of the name of Napoleon, if possible, than we are of Wellington and Nelson, and with greater reason? Should we not forgive him his ambition, his selfishness, his despotic rule? Would not every fault be forgotten in the recollection that he humbled Prussia, who had without provocation assailed us in the throes of a domestic revolution, and that he dictated terms at Vienna to Austria, who had actually begun the dismemberment of our own territory? . . . Should we not indulge a feeling of proud defiance in electing for the chief of the State the next heir to that great military hero, the child and champion of the Revolution, whose family had been especially proscribed by the coalesced powers before whom he finally fell. Yes, however wise men might moralize, and good men mourn, these would under the circumstances, I am sure, be the feelings and passions of Englishmen, aye, and probably in even a stronger degree than they are now cherished in France."

Cobden would certainly have been the last man in the world to deny that there was another and historically truer version of Napoleon's career than the version of the Napoleonic Legend; but his sound principle that masses of men never accept either maxims or idols without something generous, rational, and worthy of our respect in the motives which sanc-

1853. Æt. 49.

tioned their acceptance, drew him naturally to this interpretation of Napoleon's position in the memory of France. The interpretation, if it be not historically justifiable, is at least dramatically true. It represents what Frenchmen were thinking of; and civilization will have taken one of its most enormous strides, when the citizens of each nation do not shrink from the duty of doing justice to the better mind of every other.

The pamphlet winds up with Cobden's invariable moral, that instead of lavishing interest on foreign nations who neither seek nor need it, Englishmen will do better to turn their attention to the defects of their own social condition. "I have travelled much," he says, "and always with an eye to the state of the great majority, who everywhere constitute the toiling base of the social pyramid; and I confess I have arrived at the conclusion that there is no country where so much is required to be done before the mass of the people become what it is pretended they are, what they ought to be, and what I trust they will yet be, as in England." The justice, the real patriotism, the hope, of these closing pages are all indeed admirable; and the illustration from the history of the Irish famine of the possibility of equalling the soldier's bravery and devotion in other fields besides the field of battle, is one of the most striking passages in English prose, not only for the truth of its feeling, but for the energy, simplicity, and noble pathos of its expression.[1]

[1] "A famine fell upon nearly one half of a great nation. The whole world hastened to contribute money and food. But a few courageous men left their homes in Middlesex and Surrey, and penetrated to the remotest glens and bogs of the west coast of the stricken island, to administer relief with their own hands. To say that they found themselves in the valley of the shadow of death would be but an imperfect image; they were in the charnel-house of a nation. Never since the fourteenth century did pestilence,

1853.
ÆT. 49.

The pamphlet was published in the course of the ministerial crisis, during the formation of the new Coalition Ministry. Shortly afterwards, and almost immediately before the opening of the session under these changed auspices, Cobden attended for the fourth time the Peace Conference, which was on this occasion held at Manchester. He still nursed the honourable belief that the spread of sound information and reasonable arguments would suffice to stem the tide of national delusion, and he once more raised the old cry to which Manchester had in old days so briskly responded, for an army of lecturers and a deluge of tracts to counteract "the poison that was being infused into the minds of the people." He met a friend in the streets, who said to him, "You have come here at a very inopportune time for your Peace meeting, for everybody is in a panic, and thinks that you are wrong." Cobden manfully re-

the gaunt handmaid of famine, glean so rich a harvest. In the midst of a scene, which no field of battle ever equalled in danger, in the number of its slain or the sufferings of the surviving, these brave men moved as calm and undismayed as though they had been in their own homes. The population sank so fast that the living could not bury the dead; half-interred bodies protruded from the gaping graves; often the wife died in the midst of her starving children, whilst the husband lay a festering corpse by her side. Into the midst of these horrors did our heroes penetrate, dragging the dead from the living with their own hands, raising the head of famishing infancy, and pouring nourishment into parched lips, from which shot fever-flames more deadly than a volley of musketry. Here was courage. No music strung the nerves; no smoke obscured the imminent danger; no thunder of artillery deadened the senses. It was cool self-possession and resolute will; calculating risk and heroic resignation. And who were these brave men? To what gallant *corps* did they belong? Were they of the horse, foot, or artillery force? They were Quakers from Clapham and Kingston! If you would know what heroic actions they performed, you must inquire from those who witnessed them. You will not find them recorded in the volume of reports published by themselves—for Quakers write no bulletins of their victories."—Cobden's *Collected Writings*, i. 494-5.

1853. ÆT. 49.

plied, that this was the very reason why they were there, precisely because there never was a time yet when it was so necessary for the Peace party to redouble its efforts.

While he was at Manchester, Cobden found satisfaction in the reception which his pamphlet had at the hands both of his friends and of the public at large. If it did not work a great national conversion, at any rate it did not fall dead. Opinion decided against him for the hour, but that the question should have been regarded as an open one was the first preliminary condition of the world coming round to his view.

"*Manchester, Jan.* 27, 1853. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*) —I am writing this in the Corn Exchange. This morning's meeting is only moderately attended, but I suppose we shall be better supported in the evening. Bright has been speaking very well. Brotherton is now speaking a very good sermon. By the way, Bright came up to me to-day when we met, and exclaimed, 'What a glorious pamphlet you have written!' Henry Richard, of the Peace Society, tells me that he sat up till two o'clock this morning reading it, and is delighted. Ireland, of the *Examiner* paper, tells me he sat up to read it, and gives also a good account of it. Bright says it must be printed for twopence, and got into every house in the kingdom. I see the *Standard* paper has commenced abusing it, and is contending that the war was begun by the French and not ourselves. But the Whigs will be obliged to stand up for Fox and their party, and show the contrary."

"*Manchester, Jan.* 31, 1853. (*To Mrs. Cobden.*)—I can't tell what the *Times* means by reprinting all my pamphlet. Hitherto I don't see that their own comments have shaken it much, and I suppose

1853.
ÆT. 49.

therefore they are rather inclined to let it tell its own tale in a favourable way. But perhaps the abuse is all to come. However, it is an abundant recompense for the little night-work, and the occasional cold feet it cost me, to see it sent to all the corners of the earth upon the *Times'* broad sheet. They may abuse it as they will, but after letting it be fairly read, I have no right to complain. If, as Doctor Johnson says, the best compliment to an author is to quote him, I must surely be satisfied when the whole of my pamphlet is quoted. I don't know what the effect of the *Times* reprinting it will be upon Ridgway's sale, but it will perhaps not be unfavourable. I have a long letter from Parkes, in which he is complimentary upon the pamphlet. The Liberal press is so taken aback by this slap in their face in the very midst of their anti-French howl, that they hardly know what to say to it. There is so much that they are bound to accept and support, that they hardly know how to oppose, and yet they don't feel disposed to approve if they can help it."

The great event of the session was the first of those powerfully conceived and magnificently expounded financial schemes by which the new Chancellor of the Exchequer astonished and delighted the country. The little handful of Protectionists declared that it was a Budget for Manchester, and asked for how many years more Manchester was to dictate laws for the nation. The country gentlemen did not even yet realize that the centre of political power was slowly passing away, not for a moment only but for ever, from the hereditary and territorial, to the commercial and industrial interests. They were not wrong in perceiving that this was the track along which Mr. Gladstone was now following Sir Robert

1853. Ær. 49.

Peel. In criticizing this great Budget, Cobden naturally pressed his constant point of the importance of reduced expenditure as the true key to financial readjustment; and he pointed out that extravagance in this direction would assuredly fall upon property rather than commerce, as successive remissions of indirect taxation were inevitable. But he was particularly pleased with the imposition of the legacy duty upon real property, and described Mr. Gladstone's Budget as bold and honest.[1] On another subject he found himself in direct opposition to the Government. Mr. Milner Gibson brought forward his resolutions upon the various duties that stood in the way of a cheap press. He was supported in this attempt against the taxes on knowledge by Mr. Disraeli and his friends, and in the end he defeated Mr. Gladstone on the advertisement duty. The battle was not won for three years to come; and after the victory was achieved, the cheap newspapers which it allowed to come into existence hardly fulfilled all at once the political hopes which Cobden and the Manchester school expected. But that fact made no difference in their conviction that good must ultimately come from the abundant diffusion of information, and the constant threshing and sifting of opinion by daily discussion.

One incident at this time was like a ray of hope to Cobden. A large number of bankers and traders in the City of London went on a deputation to the Emperor of the French, practically to repudiate the language of the panic-mongers, and to express their desire for the continuance of relations of cordiality and good-will between the two countries. Unfortunately a train was now being laid in Eastern Europe which, before many months, had put an end

[1] April 28.

1853.
ÆT. 49.

to the panic of a French invasion, but brought something more mischievous than the panic in its stead. Cobden at this instant no more foresaw the war which was as yet only a cloud as of a man's hand on the horizon, than it was foreseen by the responsible statesmen in office. He passed the summer peaceably in Sussex, where he was superintending the building of his new house at Dunford. His wife and family were at Bognor, and he passed his time between the two houses. Mrs. Cobden used to bring him in a carriage as far as the Duke of Richmond's Park, and then he trudged across Goodwood Downs and over the unenclosed country to Heyshott. His thoughts meanwhile incessantly revolved round the concerns of public policy. He compiled a lucid and forcible exposure of the origin of the Burmese War, in which besides laying bare its naked arrogance, injustice, and folly, he predicted the mischief that such exploits must inevitably one day inflict on Indian finance. An expedition to a Peace Conference at Edinburgh, and a visit to Oxford were the only two breaks in his solitude.

"*Bognor, Sept.* 19, 1853. (*To Mr. McLaren.*)—You are going to do a very good but courageous act in giving your countenance to the Peace Conference. Nowhere has the movement fewer partisans than in Scotland, and the reason is obvious—first, because your heads are more combative than even the English, which is almost a phrenological miracle; and secondly, the system of our military rule in India has been widely profitable to the middle and upper classes in Scotland, who have had more than their numerical proportion of its patronage. Therefore the military party is very strong in your part of the kingdom. In this Peace Conference movement, we have not the same clear and definable principle on

1853. Æt. 49.

which to take our stand that we had in our League agitation. There are in our ranks those who oppose all war, even in self-defence; those who do not go quite so far, and yet oppose war on religious grounds in all cases but in self-defence; and there are those who from politico-economical and financial considerations are not only the advocates of peace, but also of a diminution of our costly peace establishments. Amongst the latter class I confess I rank myself. . . . We cannot disguise from ourselves that the military spirit pervades the higher and more influential classes of this country; and that the Court, aristocracy, and all that is aping the tone of the latter, believe that their interests, privileges, and even their very security are bound up in the maintenance of the 'Horse Guards.' Hence the very unfashionable character of our movement, and hence the difficulty of inducing influential persons to attend our meetings. . . . If we add to all this that the character of the English people is arrogant, dictatorial, and encroaching towards foreigners; that we are always disposed to believe that other nations are preparing to attack England; it must be apparent that in seeking to diminish our warlike establishments, we have to encounter as tough an opposition as we had in our attack on the corn monopoly, whilst we look in vain for that powerful nucleus of support which gave us hopes in the latter struggle of an eventual triumph. The tactics of the enemy have been hitherto cunning enough. The soul of the peace movement is the Quaker sentiment against all war. Without the stubborn zeal of the Friends, there would be no Peace Society and no Peace Conference. But the enemy takes good care to turn us all into Quakers, because the Non-Resistance principle puts us out of court as practical politicians

1853. ÆT. 49.

of the present day. Our opponents insist on it that we wish to totally disarm, and leave ourselves at the mercy of Louis Napoleon and the French; nay, they say we actually invite them to come and invade us."

"*Nov.* 9. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I can give you no information or suggestion about Reform. It seems as if the Turkish question this year, like the French Invasion of the last, will serve to divert the public mind from home questions. And this, in my view, is one of the great evils of our system of foreign intervention. But I must say we cannot charge it upon the aristocracy, or the executive, as a bait thrown to the whale. The so-called Radicals of the old school are more to blame. And this brings me to remark that in calling for Reform of Parliament, the Radical party (so-called) have no policy to offer as the promised fruits of another Reform Bill. When the Whigs headed the former cry in 1830, they promised retrenchment, peace, non-intervention, and all kinds of practical benefits. They have, no doubt, proved themselves to have been to a large extent impostors, but now the Radicals (I speak of those who are anything better than Whigs, and yet not of the Manchester School) have contrived to identify themselves with an absurd policy, which actually precludes the possibility of any appreciable reduction of expenditure, and puts them out of court as complainants against the aristocracy for their former system of foreign intervention, and the debts and misgovernment which have grown out of it. In fact, those Radicals who abuse us for resisting the invasion humbug and the Eastern question humbug, do not seem to perceive how they have been whitewashing all the doings of our aristocracy from 1688 to the present time; and not only so, but like

1853. Æt. 49.

the red-republican writers and orators on the Continent, they have contrived to give quiet people of property the notion that extreme liberalism means more wars, increased armaments, and greater burdens of taxation. Add to this, that Mr. Baines and a large party of Dissenters, the very salt of liberalism, have managed to snatch away from us more than half of our old cry of 'National Education,' and you see what a mess we are in for want of a Radical policy to inspire the great supine public with some hopes of advantage from a further reform of parliament.

"*Nov.* 22. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—Yesterday I got a few lines from Molesworth, asking me what I thought ought to be done in the new Reform Bill. I have replied that the Ballot must be had, but that he cannot carry it in the Cabinet at present; that the suppression of the little boroughs is a *sine quâ non* of any approximation to any fair system of representation; but that whatever Lord John may consent to do, I trust *he* will never agree to the principle of finality on the Franchise question, by which more than five millions of adult males are to be stigmatized as unworthy of any share in the government of the country. Is this a time for such a retrograde policy, when America and the Colonies are beckoning away our population to a higher economical and political fate? It is true the masses in this country are badly led and poorly informed, and I fear possess less power to influence the Legislature than at any previous time; and probably they have not even the same interest as of old in the theory of a representative system. But if this all be true, so much the worse for us all, for the lot of the millions will be the fate of the country. Without the cordial sympathy and co-operation of the masses,

1853. ÆT. 49.

our electoral system will become as soulless a thing as that which lately existed in France."

"*London, Dec.* 14, 1853. (*To F. W. Cobden.*)—I got back here yesterday from Oxford, where I spent a most agreeable time. Instead of a monastery, the University is rather a great nest of clubs, where everybody knows everybody, and all are anxious to have a stranger of any note to break the monotony of their lives. I might have lived at free quarters for weeks amongst them. The best of fare, plenty of old port and sherry, and huge fires, seem the chief characteristics of all the colleges. No bad recommendation, you will say, in December. As for the education, it is, according to Dr. Heldenmaier, 'the largest investment for the smallest return of all the academies of the world!' But after seeing some of the examinations I am inclined to think there is a greater effort required to face the ordeal than we generally suppose."

By the end of the year an extraordinary change had at last taken place in the political sky, which Cobden described in his characteristic style years afterwards. "Let us suppose an invalid," he said,[1] "to have been ordered, for the benefit of his health, to make the voyage to Australia and back. He left England in the month of February or March. The militia was preparing for duty; the coasts and dockyards were being fortified; the navy, army, and artillery were all in course of augmentation; inspectors of artillery and cavalry were reported to be busy on the southern coast; deputations from railway companies, it was said, had been waiting on the Admiralty and Ordnance, to explain how rapidly the commissariat and military stores could be trans-

[1] In *The Three Panics: An Historical Episode* (1862). *Collected Writings*, ii. 269.

1853. ÆT. 49.

ported from the Tower to Dover or Portsmouth; and the latest paragraph of news from the Continent was that our neighbours on the other side of the Channel were practising the embarkation and disembarkation of troops by night. He left home amidst all these alarms and preparations for a French invasion. After an absence of four or five months, during which time he had no opportunity of hearing more recent news from Europe, he steps on shore at Liverpool, and the first newspaper he sees informs him that the English and French fleets are lying side by side in Besika Bay. An impending naval engagement between the two Powers is naturally the idea that first occurs to him; but glancing at the leading article of the journal, he learns that England and France have entered into an alliance, and that they are on the eve of commencing a sanguinary war against Russia."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CRIMEAN WAR

1854.
Æt. 50.

At the end of May, 1853, Cobden had described to his brother that there was a good deal of uneasiness at headquarters about Turkish affairs. "The Cabinet," he said, "has been divided almost to a split upon the question of more or less direct interference on our part. The Peelites and Molesworth are the least disposed for intervention. The Whigs and Palmerston are for the old stereotyped phrases of Integrity of the Turkish Empire, Balance of Power, etc. They are words without meaning, the mere echoes of the past, and so are admirably suited for the mouths of senile Whiggery." By the end of the year, owing to a series of causes which are now well understood, the relations of Russia to the two Western Powers had been allowed to fall into an extremely dangerous position. Cobden's account of the state of the Government was unfortunately correct. The Cabinet was divided, and that came to pass which always happens in such circumstances. The section which had the strongest and most definite convictions won the day. This was the section practically headed by Lord Palmerston, and supported by the great influence of Lord John Russell. Instead of trying to know the facts of the condition of Turkey, these two Ministers rested

1854. ÆT. 50.

upon the old phrases which Cobden so truly described. Nor had either of them, again, a well-conceived notion, as Sir Robert Peel had, of the function of diplomacy in preventing strife. Diplomacy in their hands always meant either veiled menace or tart lecturing, instead of being the great, the difficult, the beneficent art, which it has been in the hands of its worthiest masters, of so reconciling interests, soothing jealous susceptibilities, allaying apprehensions, organizing influences, inventing solutions, that the world may move with something like steadiness along the grooves of deep pacific policy, instead of tossing on a viewless sea of violence and passion. If this ideal had prevailed, nobody would have sanctioned the despatch of a British Minister to Constantinople who was the bitter personal enemy of the Czar. The Peelites, on the other hand, had strong general leanings towards non-intervention, but not sufficiently definite to give them energy and determination in working out a policy that should avert war. Then the tide of popular passion rose with extraordinary rapidity. The tardiness of the diplomatists gave time for all that deep anger with which the people of England had watched the Czar's proceedings in Hungary five years before, to burst forth with a vehemence that soon became uncontrollable. The statesmen who ought to have exercised a counteracting control over it, were hurried off their feet. Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston were rivals for popularity, and neither could endure to surrender the prize to the other by making a stand against the public frenzy. The consequence was that England became the cat's-paw of Austria, Prussia, and the Emperor of the French.[1]

[1] We must remember that even the modern Road-to-India argument for the defence of Turkey had not then been invented.

War was declared in the spring of 1854. Before the summer of 1855 an extraordinary series of changes took place. The Coalition Government had fallen to pieces, Lord Palmerston had become Prime Minister, the Peelites had resigned, Lord John Russell had resigned and returned and resigned again. These confused and distracting retreats, one after another, of the statesmen who had so diligently fanned the flame of warlike passion, filled the country with a perplexed exasperation. It would indeed be difficult for the historian to find in our annals a more remarkable exhibition of political heedlessness, administrative incompetency, and personal incoherence than marked the fifteen months between the declaration of war and the second retirement of Lord John Russell. Never was confidence in public men more profoundly and universally shaken. It was now that Cobden made a declaration of a kind seldom heard from politicians: "I look back," he said, "with regret on the vote which changed Lord Derby's Government; I regret the result of that motion, for it has cost the country a hundred millions of treasure, and between thirty and forty thousand good lives." 1854. ÆT. 50.

It is not difficult to believe that at the time of the Vienna Conference (1855) Lord Palmerston felt that the continuance of the war was required by domestic emergencies. Strong language was heard at public meetings about the aristocracy. The newspapers talked very freely about Prince Albert. The cry for inquiry was so passionate that Lord Palmerston was obliged to assent to the Sebastopol Committee two or three days after he had expressly refused his assent. If peace had been made at Vienna, the nation would have discovered the spurious pleas on which the war had been begun. Its temper was dangerous, and Lord Palmerston may well have seen

1854. Æt. 50.

the risks to much that he valued, if that temper were baulked.

When we look back upon the affairs of that time, we see that there were two policies open. Lord Palmerston's was one, the Manchester policy was the other. If we are to compare Lord Palmerston's statesmanship and insight in the Eastern Question with that of his two great adversaries, it is hard, in the light of all that has happened since, to resist the conclusion that Cobden and Mr. Bright were right, and Lord Palmerston was disastrously wrong. It is easy to plead extenuating circumstances for the egregious mistakes in Lord Palmerston's policy about the Eastern Question, the Suez Canal, and some other important subjects; but the plea can only be allowed after it has been frankly recognized that they really were mistakes, and that the abused Manchester School exposed and avoided them. Lord Palmerston, for instance, asked why the Czar could not be "satisfied, as we all are, with the progressively liberal system of Turkey."[1] Cobden, in his pamphlet twenty years before, insisted that this progressively liberal system of Turkey had no existence.[2] Which of these two propositions was true, may be left to the decision of those who lent to the Turk many millions of money on the strength of Lord Palmerston's ignorant and delusive assurances. It was mainly owing to Lord Palmerston, again, that the efforts of the war were concentrated at Sebastopol. Sixty thousand English and French troops, he said, with the co-operation of the fleets, would take Sebastopol in six weeks. Cobden gave reasons for thinking very differently, and urged that the destruction of Sebastopol, even when it was achieved, would neither

[1] See Mr. Ashley's *Life*, ii. 280, 281.
[2] See above, vol. i. ch. 4.

1854.
ÆT. 50.

inflict a crushing blow on Russia, nor prevent future attacks upon Turkey. Lord Palmerston's error may have been intelligible and venial; nevertheless, as a fact, he was in error and Cobden was not, and the error cost the nation one of the most unfortunate, mortifying, and absolutely useless campaigns in English history.[1] Cobden held that if we were to defend Turkey against Russia, the true policy was to use our navy, and not to send a land force to the Crimea. Would any serious politician now be found to deny it? We might prolong the list of propositions, general and particular, which Lord Palmerston maintained and Cobden traversed, from the beginning to the end of the Russian War. There is not one of these propositions in which later events have not shown that Cobden's knowledge was greater, his judgment cooler, his insight more penetrating and comprehensive. The bankruptcy of the Turkish Government, the further dismemberment of its empire by the Treaty of Berlin, the abrogation of the Black Sea Treaty, have already done something to convince people that the two chiefs of the Manchester School saw much further ahead in 1854 and 1855 than men who had passed all their lives in foreign chanceries and the purlieus of Downing Street.

It is startling to look back upon the bullying contempt which the man who was blind permitted himself to show to the men who could see. The truth is, that to Lord Palmerston it was still incomprehensible and intolerable that a couple of manufacturers from Lancashire should presume to teach him foreign policy. Still more offensive to him was their intro-

[1] The Sebastopol Inquiry Committee reported that the administration which ordered the expedition had no adequate information as to the forces in the Crimea; that they were ignorant of the strength of the fortresses to be attacked, and the resources of the territory to be invaded.

1854. Ær. 50.

duction of morality into the mysteries of the Foreign Office. Before the opening of the session of 1854, he presided at a banquet given at the Reform Club to Sir Charles Napier on his departure to take command of the fleet in the Baltic. In proposing success to the guest of the evening, he made a speech in that vein of forced jocularity with which elderly gentlemen give the toast of the bride and bridegroom at a wedding breakfast. When Parliament assembled, Mr. Bright remonstrated[1] against the levity of these jokes and stories on the lips of a responsible statesman at so grave and ominous a moment. The war, he said, might be justifiable or not, but it must in any case be an awful thing to any nation that engaged in it. Lord Palmerston began his reply by referring to Mr. Bright as "the honourable and reverend gentleman." Cobden rose to call him to order for this flippant and unbecoming phrase. Lord Palmerston said he would not quarrel about words. Then he went on to say that he thought it right to tell Mr. Bright that his opinion was a matter of entire indifference, and that he treated his censure with the most perfect indifference and contempt. On another occasion he showed the same unmannerliness to Cobden himself. Cobden had said that under certain circumstances he would fight or, if he could not fight, he would work for the wounded in the hospitals. "Well," said Lord Palmerston in reply, with the sarcasm of a schoolboy's debating society, "there are many people in this country who think that the party to which he belongs should go immediately into a hospital of a different kind, and which I shall not mention."[2] This refined irony

[1] March 13, 1854.

[2] June 4, 1855. Mr. Disraeli on one occasion during this period complained of the "patrician bullying of the Treasury bench."

1854.
ÆT. 50.

was a very gentle specimen of the insult and contumely which was poured upon Cobden and Mr. Bright at this time. "The British nation," said Lord Palmerston, in a private letter, "is unanimous in this matter; I say unanimous, for I cannot reckon Cobden, Bright and Co. for anything."[1] Nobody who turns over a file of newspapers for this period, or the pages of *Hansard*, or the letters of Cobden and Mr. Bright to one another, will deny that Lord Palmerston's estimate was perfectly correct.

It is impossible not to regard the attitude of the two objects of this vast unpopularity as one of the most truly admirable spectacles in our political history. The moral fortitude, like the political wisdom of these two strong men, begins to stand out with a splendour that already recalls the great historic types of statesmanship and patriotism. Even now our heartfelt admiration and gratitude goes out to them as it goes out to Burke for his lofty and manful protests against the war with America and the oppression of Ireland, and to Charles Fox for his bold and strenuous resistance to the war with the first French Republic. They had, as Lord Palmerston said, the whole world against them. It was not merely the august personages of the Court, nor the illustrious veterans in Government and diplomacy, nor the most experienced politicians in Parliament, nor the powerful journalists, nor the men versed in great affairs of business. It was no light thing to confront even that solid mass of hostile judgment. But besides all this, Cobden and Mr. Bright knew that the country at large, even their trusty middle

and amid great cheering told Lord Palmerston that he had used language which was not to be expected "from one who is not only the leader of the House of Commons—which is an accident of life—but who is also a gentleman."—July 16, 1855.

[1] Mr. Ashley's *Life* ii. 325.

1854. Æt. 50.

and industrious classes, had turned their faces resolutely and angrily away from them. Their own great instrument, the public meeting, was no longer theirs to wield. The army of the Nonconformists, which has so seldom been found fighting on the wrong side, was seriously divided. The Radicals were misled by their recollection of Poland and Hungary into thinking that war against Russia must be war for freedom.

Men who had come to politics in the spirit of philosophers or prophets, might have cared very little for this terrible unanimity of common opinion. But Cobden and Mr. Bright had never affected to be disinterested spectators of the drama of national affairs. They had formed strong and definite convictions, but they had formed them with reference to the actual condition of things, and not in the air. They were neither doctrinaires nor fanatics. They had always taken up the position of reasonable actors, and talked the language of practical politicians. A practical politician without followers is as unfortunate as a general who has lost sight of his army. They had habitually appealed against aristocratic caste, against monopolist selfishness, against journalistic levity, against parliamentary insincerity, to the sovereign tribunal of Public Opinion. They had lived and worked on opinion, they had placed their whole heart in it, they had won their great victory by it. This divinity now proved as false an idol as the rest. Public opinion was bitterly and impatiently hostile and intractable. Mr. Bright was burnt in effigy. Cobden, at a meeting in his own constituency, after an energetic vindication of his opinions, saw resolutions carried against him. Every morning they were reviled in half the newspapers in the country as enemies of the commonwealth. They were openly

told that they were traitors, and that it was a pity that they could not be punished as traitors. 1854. ÆT. 50.

A more mortifying position can hardly be imagined. Mortifying as it was, it never shook their steadfastness for a moment. War could never be for them a mere commonplace incident of policy. If the necessity for it was anything short of being irresistible, war was a crime and the parent of crimes. They now asked where was the necessity, and what was the justification. The danger of the Russian power, they said, was a phantom. The expediency of permanently upholding the Ottoman rule in Europe was an absurdity. The drawbacks of non-intervention were remote and vague, and could neither be weighed nor described in accurate terms. This is their own language. With such a view, it was impossible that they could do otherwise than hold sternly aloof. "You must excuse me," said Mr. Bright, in reply to the Mayor of Manchester, who had invited him to attend a meeting for the Patriotic Fund, "if I cannot go with you; I will have no part in this terrible crime. My hands shall be unstained with the blood that is being shed. The necessity of maintaining themselves in office may influence an Administration; delusion may mislead a people; Vattel may afford you a law and a defence; but no respect I have for men who form a Government, no regard I have for going with the stream, and no fear of being deemed wanting in patriotism, shall influence me in favour of a policy which in my conscience I believe to be as criminal before God, as it is destructive of the true interests of my country."[1]

With equal firmness and equity, when disasters came and people were beginning to talk at meetings

[1] Written in October 1854. The whole of this admirable letter is given at the end of the first volume of Mr. Bright's *Speeches*.

1854. Æt. 50.

against the aristocracy and the Crown, Cobden would not consent to remove the blame of disaster from the nation itself. "So far as I am concerned," he said, "I will never truckle so low to the popular spirit of the moment as to join in any cry which shall divert the mass of the people from what I believe should be their first thought and consideration, namely, how far they themselves are responsible for the evils which may fall upon the land, and how far they should begin at home before they begin to find fault with others." [1]

It has often been asked how it happened that these two strenuous, eloquent, logical, well-informed men, with their great popular prestige and their consummate experience in framing arguments that should tell, failed so absolutely at this crisis in making any impression on the minds of their countrymen. The historian of the Crimean War, in a classic passage,[2] has said that the answer is very simple. They could make no stand because they had forfeited their hold upon the ear of the country by the immoderate and indiscriminate way in which they had put forward some of the more extravagant doctrines of the Peace party. They had no weight as opponents of a particular war, because they were known to be against almost all war. In all this there is much that is true and excellently stated. We may certainly demur to the assertion that Cobden had as a matter of fact put forward the doctrines of the Peace party in immoderate terms. A careful examination of his speeches both in the House and in the country shows that he had always advocated the principles of non-intervention, not on grounds of sentiment, philan-

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 54, June 5, 1855.

[2] Mr. Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. ii. chapter vii. pp. 69-71.

1854.
ÆT. 50.

thropy, or religion, but strictly in the dialect of policy and business. The country, however, did not at the time perceive this. People are too much occupied, and they are moreover specially disinclined by national temperament, to examine an innovating doctrine with minute and literal precision. The virtues of Englishmen lie very close to their vices. The same dogged tenacity with which they encounter obstacles in the great material and political tasks which they have set themselves throughout their adventurous history all over the world, binds them closely to their prejudices. The same invincible stubbornness, as Haydon said, which beat the French at Waterloo, makes them prepare to receive cavalry at every innovation. They eye every reform as they would an enemy's cuirassier.[1] Above all, though full of religious sentiment, in every reference to morality in practical politics they instantly suspect cant. Cobden knew all this as well as anybody. But what he also knew was that the doctrine could only be made to take a hold on men by strenuous and persistent advocacy, even at the risk of this advocacy being misunderstood. Events showed in the long-run that his tactics were prudent. It was by the strenuousness and persistency of himself and Mr. Bright, that they at last succeeded in making that gross and broad impression which it was their object to produce. They were routed on the question of the Crimean War, but it was the rapid spread of their principles which within the next twenty years made intervention impossible in the Franco-Austrian War, in the American War, in the Danish War, in the Franco-German War, and, above all, in the war between Russia and Turkey which broke out only the other day.

On the whole, however, it is perfectly clear that

[1] Haydon's *Memoirs*, ii. 273, 274.

1854. Æt. 50.

the failure of the two Manchester leaders to affect opinion at this time was due to the simplest of all possible causes. The public had worked itself into a mood in which the most solid reasoning, the most careful tenderness of prejudice, the most unanswerable expostulations were all alike unavailing. The incompetency of one part of the Ministry, and the recklessness of the other part, pushed us over the edge. When that has once happened, a Peace party has no longer any chance. Cobden described this some years later in connexion with the civil war in America. "It is no use to argue," he said, "as to what is the origin of the war, and no use whatever to advise the disputants. From the moment the first shot is fired, or the first blow is struck in a dispute, then farewell to all reason and argument; you might as well reason with mad dogs as with men when they have begun to spill each other's blood in mortal combat. I was so convinced of the fact during the Crimean War; I was so convinced of the utter uselessness of raising one's voice in opposition to war when it has once begun, that I made up my mind that so long as I was in political life, should a war again break out between England and a great Power, I would never open my mouth upon the subject from the time the first gun was fired until the peace was made."[1]

During these two years of disaster and mistake, Cobden could not do more than raise protests from time to time as opportunity served. The House of Commons was much more tolerant than larger and less responsible assemblies. Describing the reception of his speech against the Ministerial policy at the opening of the session of 1854, Cobden wrote to his wife:—"No enthusiasm, of course;—that I

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 314, Oct. 29, 1862.

1855.
ÆT. 51.

did not expect; but there was a feeling of interest throughout the House, which is not bumptious or warlike to the extent I expected, and not disposed to be insolent to the 'Peace party.' In fact, I find many men in the Tory party agreeing with me. After I spoke, Molesworth took me aside and said he and Gladstone thought I never spoke better." The failure, again, of the negotiations at Vienna in the summer of 1855, and the consequent perseverance in the war, inspired him with one of his most forcible speeches, and subsequent events have made it more completely unanswerable now than it was even then. It is still worthy of being read by any one who cares to know how strong a case the Manchester School was able to make.[1] "The House was very full," Cobden wrote to Mrs. Cobden on the following day, "and sat and stood it out most attentively. Not one breath of disapprobation, and a fair share of support in the way of cheers. I was complimented by many members after it was over. Amongst others, Lytton Bulwer walked across the House to offer his congratulations. All this is not fit to be repeated at your breakfast-table as coming from me. Sidney Herbert remarked that it carried him back again to my old Corn Law speeches; and Lord Elcho (formerly Mr. Charteris) has just this moment come to whisper in my ear that he considers my speech better than Gladstone's. The roar of laughter against Molesworth at my 'black and curly' allusion disconcerted him sadly. I met Molesworth in the cloak-room on leaving the House. We exchanged a bantering word or two. 'How are you?' said he, with a grim effort at the facetious. 'How are *you*?' was my reply. After turning from me he fell plump into Bright's hands, who was wait-

[1] *Speeches*, ii., June 5, 1855.

1855. ÆT. 51.

ing for me, and who rallied him unmercifully, telling him he had not had half his deserts, and that he had something yet in store for him himself. Molesworth tried to be audacious, and told Bright, 'You are just as bad as I am.' Lord John will get sadly mauled before the end of it. The part I brought out respecting his signing away the rights of the Wallachians and Moldavians will be flung in his face again. Roebuck says he shall tell him that he ought to be ashamed to show his face in the House after affirming such a doctrine."

After reading this speech, so full of knowledge and comprehensive reasoning and of strong moderation as distinguished from the same quality when it is weak, we can understand that even in the midst of their anger against Cobden and Mr. Bright, people began to feel secret misgivings that they might be right after all. "There is a growing mistrust," Cobden wrote to Mrs. Cobden about this time, "of the durability of Palmerston's Ministry. I have heard from several quarters that if I and Bright had not been so 'wrong' on the war we should certainly have been forced into the Ministry. Two letters from Delane, the Editor of the *Times*, written to friends of his, but not intended for my eye, have been put into my hands, in which this sentiment is expressed that Bright and I must have been Ministers if we had not shelved ourselves by our peace principles."

Until the end of 1855 the prospects of peace seemed very remote. Lord John Russell described the state of things with characteristic concision in a letter to Cobden. "The peace of Amiens," he said (Nov. 12, 1855), "a very disadvantageous peace—gave universal joy. The peace of 1763, a very glorious peace—gave general dissatisfaction. The

1854.
ÆT. 50.

people of this country are not tired of war, and do not much feel the sacrifices you speak of. When they are tired, they will blame any Minister who does not make peace." The French Emperor was in a similar predicament. Marshal Vaillant told him that he would not answer for the French army if it were brought home without laurels. In this unpromising situation Cobden sat down to write a pamphlet, which was published at the beginning of 1856, *What Next—and Next?*[1] Without going into the question of the origin of the war, Cobden made it his object "to give some facts about Russia with a view to prevent the self-confidence into which people fell of humbling that Power on her own soil." "I suppose people won't read it," he said, "but my conscience will be at rest."

It now remains to give some of Cobden's correspondence at this time, principally from that with Mr. Bright.

"*Midhurst, Sept.* 14, 1854. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I am in the midst of the removal of my books, and for the last few days have been up to my chin in dusty tomes and piles of old pamphlets, a cartload of which I am consigning to the hay-loft for waste paper. Fortunately for me my mind has therefore been little occupied on public affairs, which I confess afford me but little food for pleasant reflection.

"I am as much satisfied as ever that we have followed a right course on the war question. It must be right for us, because we have followed our own conscientious convictions. But in proportion as we are devoted to our principles must be our regret to see so little prospect of their being adopted as the practical guide of our foreign policy. It is no use blinking the fact that there are not a score

[1] *Collected Writings*, vol. ii.

1854. ÆT. 50.

of men in the House, and but few out of the ranks of the Friends in the country, who are ready to take their stand upon the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries. This is no reason why we should hold our peace; but it shows that we have to begin at the beginning, by converting to our views that public opinion which is at present all but unanimously against us.

"I sometimes regret that I omitted to call meetings in Yorkshire before the war began. As it is, we must wait results, which will be serious one way or another soon, if the expedition to Sebastopol has been carried into effect. My own opinion is that if the Anglo-French army can make good a landing, it will be a match in the open field for three times its number of Russian troops. But there are all the accidents of wind and weather. How Lord Aberdeen must have quaked at the sound of the equinoctial gales which began blowing last night a week before they were due. The fate of the Ministry quite as much as that of the generals hangs on the result. If, owing to the weather at sea, or the climate on shore, or the dogged resistance of the Russians behind their walls, the expedition should fail, there will be a cry for a change of Government. The English Radicals and Tories will alike demand 'victims' to appease their wrath. If it succeed, no matter at what cost of life, the Ministry will be saved."

"*Midhurst, Oct.* 1, 1854. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—You ask when *our* turn will come. When common sense and honesty are in the ascendant, a day for me not very likely to be realized, as I am fifty, and not of a long-lived family. You have a better chance, but don't be too sanguine. It is very singular but true that if we look back to the originators and propa-

1854.
ÆT. 50.

gators of this Russiaphobia, they have been almost without exception half-cracked people. I could give a list of them, including Urquhart, Atwood, etc. Unfortunately we live in an age when in this country at least mad people have still a very great power over other minds. . . .

"I sometimes feel quite puzzled when I ask myself what result in the present struggle for Sebastopol would be the most likely to promote the end you and I desire to see, a distaste for war and a wish on all sides for peace? Putting humanity and patriotism aside for the sake of argument, perhaps the best thing that could happen would be a long and sanguinary contest without decisive result, until the German powers stepped in to compel the exhausted combatants to come to terms. For whether the one or the other side win, I foresee great evils to follow. Let John Bull have a great military triumph, and we shall all have to take off our hats as we pass the Horse Guards for the rest of our lives. On the other hand, let the Czar's swollen pride be gratified and inflamed with victory, it will foster that spirit of military insolence which pervades everything in Russia. But if neither could claim a decisive triumph, and both were thoroughly discouraged and disgusted with their sacrifices, they might all in future be equally disposed to be more peaceable.

"It is scarcely possible to foresee any other result than this, unless upon the assumption that the Russian Empire is a more thorough imposture than anybody has suspected. And yet if the accounts be true, there does not seem to be a great force to protect Sebastopol, and all their Black Sea ships and arsenals, notwithstanding that the Government have had more than two months' notice from Lord John Russell himself of our intention to strike a blow

1854. ÆT. 50.

there. What an illustration it is of the weakness which accompanies the acquisition of territory by mere military conquests on a large scale. We know that Russia has more than 600,000 effective troops, and yet if report be true she cannot concentrate 50,000 for the defence of a vital point. Little Belgium could do more. . . .

"But I cannot convince myself that we are to have an easy victory in the Crimea. I was reading last night the account of Bonaparte's Russian campaign. If the Russians fight behind their entrenchments now as they did at Borodino (where 70,000 were put *hors-de-combat*), there will be wailing here before another month. I can't see anything in the tactics of the enemy in allowing our forces to land without molestation to warrant the confident tone of our Cockney press. The Russians would have been fools to have brought their men under the fire of our ships' guns. By the way, Napoleon entered Moscow without opposition on the 14th Sept. 1812, and we landed in the Crimea on the 14th Sept. 1854. Some people may think this an evil omen. We shall soon be relieved from our suspense."

To Mr. Bright.—" . . . I have no news beyond what the papers give, which seems bad enough. The next thing will be, I suppose, an assault with the bayonet, to satisfy the morbid impatience of the public at home and the soldiery on the spot, and heaven only can tell what the result may be.

"I suspect from what oozes out that the Government have unfavourable forebodings. This accounts for the fall on the Paris Bourse, where the effects of bad news are always felt first, owing to the stock-jobbers being more mixed up with the personnel of

1855.
ÆT. 51.

the Government than here. A man who was at the Lord Mayor's banquet told me the Ministers were looking very dejected. That they ought to be unhappy is certain; and yet when we have helped to turn them out, as I should be very glad to do, we shall have done little to avert a repetition of the evils of war until the public sentiment can be reached, for if a people will be ruled by phrases such as 'balance of power,' 'integrity and independence,' etc., when uttered solemnly by men in power, you may depend on it they will always find 'statesmen' to take office on such easy terms. I do not know how it is to be done, but I am quite sure there is no security for anything better until we can teach the *people* a lesson of moderation and modesty in foreign affairs, and enlighten that almost Spanish or Chinese ignorance about everything going on abroad which characterizes the masses of our countrymen.

"I am willing to incur any obloquy in telling the whole truth to the public as to the share they have had in this war, and it is better to face any neglect or hostility than allow them to persuade themselves that anybody but themselves are responsible for the war."

"*Midhurst, Jan.* 5, 1855. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I agree with you that there is some change in the public mind upon the war; but the more moderate tone is less to be attributed to pacific tendencies than to the lassitude which naturally follows a great excitement. There is about as much unsoundness as ever abroad about foreign affairs. A few exceptions scattered over the land have come to my knowledge since I spoke in the House. I have heard from a few parsons, amongst others; they are, I suppose, eccentricities who have not much weight.

"The break-down of our aristocratic rulers, when

1855. ÆT. 51

their energies are put to the stress of a great emergency, is about the most consolatory incident of the war. I am not sure that it will so far raise the middle class in their own esteem as to induce them to venture on the task of self-government. They must be ruled by lords. Even the *Times* is obliged to make the *amende* to the aristocratic spirit of the age by calling for that very ordinary but self-willed lord, the Governor-General of India, to come and save us.[1] But the discredit and the slaughter to which our patricians, civil and military, have been exposed, will go far to make real war unpopular with that influential class for another generation to come, whilst the swift retribution likely to fall on the Cabinet will tend to make Governments less warlike in future. As for the people, they have scarcely felt the effects of the war as yet, but they are rapidly developing themselves in diminished trade and increasing able-bodied pauperism, and augmented taxation will follow.

"The most dishonest or most 'incapable and guilty' feature in the conduct of the Government, to my judgment, has been their readiness to fall into the warlike humour of the public, and concealing from them the extent of the undertaking. Even Gladstone has lent himself to the delusion that the people can be indulged with a *cheap war*. It is impossible to believe that the Ministry were so ignorant as to suppose that we could fight Russia on her own territory, 3000 miles distant by sea, for £10,000,000. But really I believe Palmerston or Lord John would have undertaken to do it by contract for as many shillings, rather than not have gained the sweet voice of the multitude twelve months since.

[1] Lord Dalhousie was now Governor-General.

1855.
ÆT. 51.

"I observe what you say about the want of more co-operation amongst our friends . . . in the House. What we really want is sympathy and support for our views out-of-doors. We have a far better hearing in Parliament than in the country. I defy you, from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, to find a mixed body of men in which you and I should be so well treated as we were on the last day of the session. It is the want of identity between the great public and ourselves on important and engrossing questions of principle that leaves us in such an isolated position in the House. I am content to be as we are, with nothing but an approving conscience for the course we pursue. Not that I am, as Parkes says, without ambition. If I had been where Sumner and Amasa Walker are, I should have set no bounds to my ambition; but my judgment told me twenty years ago that if I aimed at office in this country, it must lead either to disappointment or an abandonment of objects which I cherish far before official rank, and therefore I preferred pioneering for my convictions to promotion at the expense of them."

"*January* 10, 1855. (*To Colonel Fitzmayer.*)—I have again to thank you for your continued kindness in sending me the regular news of your siege operations. When I think of all the discomfort under which your letters are penned, I cannot too highly value such proofs of your friendship. . . .

"Before this reaches you, the news will have been carried to the Crimea that negotiations for peace have been opened on the basis of the four points. It remains to be seen whether the Czar is in earnest, and whether the allies enter in a *bonâ fide* spirit upon the deliberations. I am inclined to believe that all the Governments are heartily sick of the war, and therefore shall not be surprised if a peace be speedily

1855. ÆT. 51.

arranged. But in the meantime our newspapers must swagger a good deal over the Czar, and persuade their readers that we have subjected him to great humiliations. I confess, however, that I do not see the grounds for this boastful self-glorification. It is true that you have beaten the Russians in the field, but there is always the broad fact remaining that Sebastopol is not taken. It is no fault of your brave army that the place is still holding out—the fact is we never ought to have made the plunge in the dark in the Crimea at all. Indeed it has been admitted in the House by Lord John Russell that both Government and generals had been mistaken in their estimate of its strength. This confession ought to suffice to condemn the present Administration to dismissal from office; for there can be no excuse for ignorance on a point which might have been very easily cleared up before the expedition sailed. I think I could have undertaken in June last to have obtained the most minute particulars as to the strength of Sebastopol for a few thousand pounds.

"There are some points raised in your letter which I shall hope to be able to discuss with you at my fireside when you return again to England, for my wife and I trust you will honour us with a visit to this picturesque and secluded part of the country. But in the meantime I must be allowed to say in reference to your allusions to a regular standing army, that I am not opposed to the maintenance of a disciplined force to serve as a nucleus in case of war, around which the people might rally to defend their country. But there is hardly a case to be imagined or assumed in which I would consent to send out a body of land forces to fight the battles of the Continent; and last of all would I agree to send such an expedition to the shores of Russia.

1855. ÆT. 51.

"There is now a general complaint that we allowed our army to fall to too low a standard, in consequence of the cry of the financial reformers for a reduction of the expenditure. I am bound to say that if this country adopts the policy of sending its armies to fight the Czar on his own territory, then it is bound to keep up a force commensurate with the magnitude of such an undertaking. We must become a military people like France and Austria. This will be contrary to our traditions, and quite incompatible with an economical Government. I am not sure that constitutional freedom can co-exist with large standing armies. I know of no instance in which they have flourished together. However, we will adjourn the debate on this subject till we meet."

"*February* 11, 1855. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—You made an excellent speech at the Chamber of Commerce, which at the present moment will compel many men to listen to your warnings who have hitherto been deaf to everything but the appeals to 'glory and honour.'

"Did you see Cornewall Lewis's speech? It was a good sign coming from the *Edinburgh Review*.

"But I can think of nothing else but the Derby-Disraeli *exposé*![1] . . . What can your friend Dizzy say or do in opposition to the Government, after having agreed not merely to serve under Palmerston, but to sit in the same Cabinet with Gladstone and

[1] "Lord Derby was sent for to form a Government, and immediately sought the co-operation of Lord Palmerston, offering him the leadership of the House of Commons, which Mr. Disraeli was willing to waive in his favour. Offers were also made through him to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert." Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. 304. "Derby," wrote Lord Palmerston to his brother, "felt conscious of the incapacity of the greater portion of his party, and their unfitness to govern the country."

1855. Æt. 51. Sidney Herbert! And what will our soft Radicals say after the affectionate flirtation of Lord Derby with their great champion of democracy all over the world? Lord D. seems to me to have played a clever game for the future, and is, I suppose, acting under the inspiration of such men as Lord Lonsdale in casting himself loose from *all* his old team and opening the door for fresh alliances. Lord Palmerston can't of course last many years, or perhaps months, and then the 'great Conservative party' is the only one not used up. But what is to become of Disraeli? He can't be first whilst Gladstone is either with him or against him, and he won't play second to anybody but Palmerston. Will it end in his going ambassador to Paris? In the meantime he has to eat a good deal of dirt.

"As for the Government, unless they put on fresh masks and dresses, we shall certainly think them the same gentlemen who got us into a 'foolish, just, and necessary war,' as Sidney Smith would call it, and then threw away the finest army we ever had for want of staff and generals. As for the exchange of Panmure for Newcastle, we who have been behind the scenes know that the public gain nothing by that. Again and again I ask myself, in witnessing the childish glee with which the press and public call for Palmerston to serve them—are we not a used-up nation? Could any people not in its dotage look to such a quarter for a saviour? However, it is a consolation that we shall soon see the bursting of that bubble which the Cockney clacqueurs have been so industriously blowing for the last few years. . . .

"As respects the prospect of peace, I am of opinion that Palmerston will be anxious to steal from Aberdeen the credit of getting out of the war.

1855.
Æt. 51.

Depend on it the Court and aristocracy are more than ever anxious to put an end to hostilities. They have found for the first time that their prestige, privileges, and dearest interests are more endangered than those of any other class by a state of war. It will be a blessed advantage to us that henceforth our best allies in the advocacy of peace principles will be in high quarters. My only doubt is whether Louis Napoleon has some sinister motives for continuing the war. I don't like the tone of Drouyn de L'Huys's notes to Prussia. They are novel in style, especially for so cautious and clever a diplomatist, and I learn from Faucher they are making a great and mischievous impression upon the public mind in Prussia.

"For my part, I can't think of these things and to what an extent *we* as a people are wrong in our alliances and tendencies without most cynical misgivings respecting the future course of our foreign policy. There is positively no intelligence amongst the masses on such subjects to serve as a leverage in dealing with the abounding fallacies of the juveniles, who, fresh from college, 'do' this department of our periodical literature, and take either the line of our old aristocratic diplomacy in favour of the 'balance of power' and dynastic alliances, or the more modern and equally unsound and mischievous line newly adopted by our so-called 'democrats' on behalf of Mazzini and the 'nationalities.' There is no out-of-doors support for the party of peace and non-intervention."

"*Midhurst, Sept.* 30. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I think you will read the enclosed with interest. There is a description of what the writer witnessed at the hospital in Sebastopol, which surpasses everything I have read. The graphic account of the horses

1855. ÆT. 51.

lying harnessed to the guns at the bottom of the clear blue water comes back to my mind's eye like a real picture. You will see that he speaks of our failure at the Redan as arising solely from the fact of the men not following their officers to the assault. He is always on the side of the *men*, and he finds excuses for them at the expense of the officers. But the real solution of the disaster is that the troops were raw recruits—mere boys, and I expect that after a little more recrimination between the parties concerned the whole truth will come out, that, in the words of the *Times*' correspondent, 'we are trusting the honour, reputation, and glory of Great Britain to undisciplined lads from the plough or the lanes of our towns and villages.' It will end in an exposure of the hollowness of all those demonstrations of the press and the public in favour of this just and necessary war—for it will come out that the bone and muscle of the country take no part in it, but leave the recruiting-sergeant as best he can to kidnap mere children and carry them off to the shambles.

"This sham must blow up, but the press and Palmerston are so interested in not telling the people that they must do something more than pass resolutions, write inflammatory articles, or preach incendiary sermons—that they must in fact do the fighting as well as the shouting for war, that I expect they will let matters go on till we are plunged into some deep humiliation and disgrace. As it is, the French army are trying to soothe us with compliments so overdone that we cannot help seeing through the grimaces which accompany them. Depend on it, if the war goes on, men of sense will see that we must either have the conscription, like our opponents and allies, to secure a fair representation of the manhood of

1855. ÆT. 51.

the country in the battle-field, or drop our bombastic posturing and come down to a level with the Sardinians, and be a mere contingent of the French army. The French will gradually but with every possible protestation of respect bring us to this. They are now acting almost independently of us, and from this time we shall see more and more the difficulty of our maintaining an equality.

"What is doing about the penny paper?[1] I hear from Sturge that he has doubts about ——. He speaks of —— and ——. I have the most perfect confidence in the good faith of these men, but if a precaution such as is contemplated be taken that the paper shall not go wrong, I should be inclined to say that it would be as well not to have a too enthusiastic peace man as its managing editor. The difficulty is to get a daily newspaper with a circulation of 30,000 established. If it be an expansion of the *Herald of Peace*, it will never be established as a *newspaper*—at least not this year. There must be a good deal of the wisdom of the serpent as well as the harmlessness of the dove to float such a paper, and unless it can be established as a newspaper, it will not attain the object we have in view. What say you to this?"

"*Aug.* 6. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—What an atrocious article there is in the *Athenæum* of last Saturday upon Tennyson's poems. War is in itself a blessing and the mother of blessings. We owe to it our great poets and men of genius.[2] It is quite clear, accord-

[1] This refers to the establishment of the *Morning Star*. Cobden had no financial interest in the venture, Mr. Sturge being a principal subscriber. It was understood that Cobden and Mr. Bright were to be consulted as to the policy of the new journal. As we shall see, this constant reference to them was so overdone that Cobden himself warned the editor against it—an instructive warning to leading politicians who meddle with newspapers.

[2] *Maud* was published at this time, full of beautiful poetry and

1855. ÆT. 51.

ing to the writer, that there must have been a mistake in the record of Christ's preaching. It was war, not peace, He left for a legacy to man. How could He possibly bring peace into the world to corrupt and degrade it? It is enthroning the devil in the place of the God of mercy, truth, love, and justice; for what has war to do with these?"

"*August* 8, 1855.— . . . I paid a visit on Wednesday to my neighbour the Bishop of Oxford, and met Lord Aberdeen, Roundell Palmer, and some others. The old Earl was even more emphatic than at the same place a year ago in lamenting to me that he had suffered himself to be drawn into the Russian war. He declared that he ought to have resigned.[1] Speaking of the authors of his policy he said, 'It was not the Parliament or the public, but the Press that forced the Government into the war. The public mind was not at first in an uncontrollable state, but it was made so by the Press.' He might have added that —— had some-

barbarous politics, about "the long long canker of peace being over and done," and so forth. The singular implication of the poet is that the best way to rescue the poor from being "hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine," is to cultivate "the blood-red blossom of war." Unluckily war cannot go on without taxes, and taxes in the long-run in a thousand ways aggravate the hovelling and hustling of the poor, as the state of the labourers after the war of Cobden's youth showed. That a man of Mr. Tennyson's genius should have been so led astray, only illustrates the raging folly of those two years.

[1] Sir James Graham in the same way said to Mr. Bright: "You were entirely right about that war; we were entirely wrong, and we never should have gone into it." Bright's *Speeches*, i. 192. "This war," wrote Sir George C. Lewis, who joined the Palmerston Government after Mr. Gladstone's resignation, "has been distasteful to me from the beginning, and especially so from the time when it ceased to be defensive and the Russian territory was invaded. My dislike of it, and my conviction of its repugnance to the interests of England and Europe was only increased with its progress." Feb. 14, 1855.—*Letters*, p. 291.

thing to do with it. I really could not help pitying the old gentleman, for he was in an unenviable state of mind, and yet I doubt if there be a more reprehensible human act than to lead a nation into an unnecessary war, as Walpole, North, Pitt, and Aberdeen have done, against their own conviction and at the dictation of others. . . ." 1855. ÆT. 51.

"*Sept.* 18. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I am actually so amazed and disgusted and excited at the frenzy to which all classes—and especially those called middle and respectable—have abandoned themselves, and am so horrified at the impudent impiety with which they make God a witness and partaker of their devilish paroxysm, that I would rather say nothing about it. My only hope is in Louis Napoleon—his interests and necessities. When I saw Lord Aberdeen a few weeks since, he said that his only hope of peace was founded on a favourable issue of the siege of Sebastopol; that if Louis Napoleon could meet with a 'success' to satisfy his army, he would seize the opportunity of making peace. Well, he has now the opportunity, and I have a strong impression (though founded on no facts) that he has sent pacific proposals to our Government, and that this embarrassing message is the cause of the frequent and long Cabinet Councils—for how can *our* Government make out a case to their deluded followers to justify a peace which must certainly involve the abandonment of the Crimea? The danger is that Louis Napoleon, whose one dominant idea is the alliance with England, may yield to Palmerston and the warlike spirit of our people, and go on with the war. But he has grave reasons against such a course at home. He will have to raise another army to pursue the war in the interior of Russia; bread is constantly rising in price; and there is an ugly

1855. Æt. 51.

symptom of rottenness in the financial state of France, as illustrated by the Dr. and Cr. of the Bank of France, and the rapid fall of some of the public securities. How does it illustrate the madness of our combative countrymen when one can only turn with hope for peace to the coercion of a Bonaparte upon the deliberations of our Cabinet! I don't see how we can act with Gladstone in the broad advocacy of non-intervention, so long as he professes to be an advocate of the policy of invading Russia. He seems to put an impassable gulf between us by that one argument, for if anything is ever to be done again in favour of peace principles, it must be by persuading the masses at least to repudiate the very principle of the Russian invasion. . . ."

"*Oct.* 5. (*To M. Chevalier.*)—If war had not absorbed my anxieties, I should have given all my sympathies to the great industrial rivalry to which you have invited the nations of the world. I should have thought of the *Champs Élysées* if my attention had not been unhappily so much *distrait* by the terrible scene which was exhibiting on the *Champ de Mars*. In fine, I deferred my visit to the Temple of Peace until after that of Janus should have been closed. But I fear that present appearances are against the realization of my plan; and it is more than ever uncertain when I shall see you. Under these circumstances I shall trouble you upon paper, instead of *vivâ voce*, with a little unreserved chat upon the subject of the war.

"You will remember that we had some confidential correspondence a few years ago, when the state of popular feeling here towards your Government was the very opposite to what it is now; and I have reason to know that that correspondence had a favourable influence upon the relations of the two

countries, through the publication of those facts and statistics which you gave me; and I wish we could now in a similar manner contribute to the restoration of the peace of the world. When in 1852 I published in speech and pamphlet my views respecting the cry of a 'French invasion,' I was denounced by nearly every London newspaper, and at present I am in pretty nearly the same predicament respecting my opinions upon the war. But is it not possible that two or three years may produce in my opponents the same change upon the one question that has undoubtedly been effected on the other? Depend on it there is a good deal of unreasoning passion and pecuniary selfishness on the part of the people and the press of this country in the present warlike clamour. 1855. ÆT. 51.

"I know proprietors of newspapers (the ——— for example) who have pocketed £3000 or £4000 a year through the war, as directly as if the money had been voted to them in the Parliamentary estimates. It is not likely, unless they are very disinterested specimens of human nature, that they will oppose a policy so profitable to themselves. But the *people*, who have no interest in being misled, will probably become satiated with monotonous appeals to their combative passions, and then the *papers* will change. The moment this reaction of feeling shows itself in considerable force, there are all the most able statesmen of this country ready to head the party of peace. For it is a remarkable fact, that whilst the mass of politicians appear to be so warlike, their leaders are all in their hearts opposed to a continuance of the war. I do not, of course, include Lord Palmerston amongst the number of leaders, for it is a notorious fact that he never possessed the confidence of a dozen members of the

1855. ÆT. 51.

House, and was therefore never at the head of a party. It is only because all the Parliamentary chiefs shrink from the responsibility of continuing the war that he has been enabled to seize the reins. All men of the age of seventy-two, with unsatisfied ambition, are desperadoes; and Lord Palmerston, in addition to this qualification, having had the experience of nearly half a century of Parliamentary life, having continued to persuade the democracy that he was a revolutionist, whilst the aristocracy knew him to be *their* safe friend, he became the fittest incarnation of the delusion, bewilderment, and deception into which the public mind had been plunged; and he and his colleagues hold office to carry on a war for the continuance of which no other statesmen choose to be responsible. Had it not been for the war, the present ministry could never have been in power, and it will not last two months after the return of peace."

"*Dec.* 19. (*To H. Ashworth.*)—I have been gratified by the receipt of your letter. The newspaper also reached me. It is sad to see the bewilderment of the poor people about the price of bread, but we ought to be very tolerant with them, seeing how much ignorance we meet with amongst their 'betters.'

"The papers are underrating the effect of the drain of capital for the war on the *floating* capital of the country. People look at the assessment returns of real property, and they say, 'See how much more rich we are than we were in the last war.' But this fixed property is not available for war. It is only the floating capital which sets it in motion that is available. Now, I suspect that the proportion of floating to fixed capital employed in the manufactures of the country is less in relation to the number of

workpeople employed than ever it was. Am I right in this? Has not the tendency been to increase the fixed as compared with the floating capital in a mill. If so, it is a very serious question how soon the withdrawal of the life-blood (the floating capital) may stop the whole body. With interest of capital at six to seven per cent for trading purposes, how long will it be before some of the weaker among you go to the wall? If, as you say, the cotton trade as a whole has paid no profit, there must be a large proportion that are losing, and they will break if the war goes on. Then will follow distress among the operatives. 1856. ÆT. 52

"You hear a good deal about agricultural prosperity. Turn to the dictionary, and 'agriculturist' means one who has skill to cultivate the land. The labourer is the agriculturist quite as much as the farmer, and he belongs to a body five to one more numerous. I assure you I never saw more distress among this class. They are generally employed. But their wages here never exceed 12s., and are often only 10s., and if you try to calculate how a man and his wife and three or four small children live upon this sum, with bread at 2½d. a lb., you will find your arithmetical talent very much taxed. Dry bread is all that they can get. The pigs have disappeared from their sties. They and their children are looking haggard and pale and ragged, and this is agricultural prosperity."

When the war was at last brought to an end at the Congress of Paris in the spring of 1856, two remarkable steps were taken by the assembled plenipotentiaries in Cobden's direction. They recognized the expediency and the possibility of submitting international differences to arbitration.

1856. Ær. 52. Secondly they incorporated in the public law of Europe certain changes in the right of maritime capture which tended to make trade which was free in time of peace, as free as possible in time of war also.

CHAPTER XXV

DEATH OF HIS SON

1856.
Æt. 52.

At this moment Cobden was stricken by one of those cruel blows from which men and women often recover, but after which they are never again what they were before. He lost his only son, a boy of singular energy and promise. The boy, who was now fifteen years old, was at school at Weinheim, about fourteen miles from Heidelberg. He was suddenly seized by an attack of scarlet fever, and died in the course of three or four days (April 6, 1856), before his parents at home even knew that he was ill. There was nothing to soften the horror of the shock. Cobden was the first to hear of what had happened. His friend, Chevalier Bunsen, had recommended the school, a few miles away from Charlottenburg, his own residence. The schoolmaster sent Bunsen a telegraphic message, and took for granted that Bunsen would communicate with Cobden. Bunsen, on the other hand, took it for granted that the news would be sent by the schoolmaster. The result was that Cobden heard nothing until he heard all. In a letter to one of the most intimate of his friends, he told how the blow fell:—

"I had invited Colonel Fitzmayer from the Crimea to breakfast at nine on the Thursday. When

1856. Æt. 52. I came down from my sleeping-room in Grosvenor Street, I found him and the breakfast waiting. My letters were lying on the table, and I apologized for opening them before beginning our meal, and the third letter I opened informed me that my dear boy, who by the latest accounts was described as the healthiest and strongest in the school, was dead and in his grave. No one not placed in the same situation can form the faintest conception of my task in making the journey to this place [Dunford], which took me five hours, bearing a secret which I knew was worse than a sentence of death on my poor wife, for she would have gladly given her life, a dozen times, if it were possible to save his. I found her in the happiest spirits, having just before been reading to my brother and the family circle a long letter from the dear boy, written a few days previously, and when he was in the best possible state of health. I tried to *manage* my communication, but the dreadful journey had been too much for me, and I broke down instantly, and was obliged to confess all. She did not comprehend the loss, but was only stunned; and for twenty-four hours was actually lavishing attentions on me, and superintending her household as before."

I have been told how he entered his house at nightfall, and met his wife unexpectedly on the threshold; she uttered an exclamation as she caught his haggard and stricken face. His little children were making merry in the drawing-room. He could only creep to his room, where he sat with bent head and prostrate, unstrung limbs. When the first hours were over, and the unhappy mother realized the miserable thing that had befallen her, she sat for many days like a statue of marble, neither speaking nor seeming to hear; her eyes not even turning to

notice her little girl whom they placed upon her knee, her hair blanching with the hours. 1856. ÆT. 52.

It would be a violation of sacred things to dwell upon the months that followed. Cobden felt as men of his open and simple nature are wont to feel, when one of the great cruelties of life comes home to their bosoms. He was bewildered by the eternal perplexities of reconciling untimely death with the common morality of things. "God!" he exclaims, repeating a commonplace of the grave, so old and well-worn, yet ever fresh in its pathos, "what a mystery of mysteries is this life—that one so young and bright, around whom our hopes and dreams had been twining themselves for fifteen years, should be in a few hours struck down and withered like a weed!" His was not a soul to lose itself in brooding over the black enigma. There is not a word of rebellion. He accepts the affliction as a decree of the inscrutable Power, and his quiet and humble patience touches us the more, because we discern the profound suffering beneath it. His anguish at the blighting of his own love and hope was made keener by the strange torpor which now and for long afflicted his wife. His tenderness and devotion to her in the midst of all this agony, were unremitting and inexhaustible. Six weeks after the fatal news had come, he was able to write to his brother-in-law:—"I have not been out of her sight for an hour at a time (except at the funeral) since we learnt our bereavement; and I do not believe she would have been alive and in her senses now, if I had not been able to lessen her grief by sharing it." And this urgent demand upon his sympathies and attention continued beyond weeks, into months.

"My poor wife," he writes to a friend,[1] "makes

[1] *To Joseph Parkes*, May 23, 1856.

1856. Æt. 52.

but slow progress in the recovery of her health. She is on the lawn or in the field all day with a little spade in hand, digging up the weeds; it is the only muscular effort she can make, and it unfortunately leaves her mind free to brood over the one absorbing subject. The open air must in time give her strength, but as yet she has not been able to pass a night without the aid of opiates. Her friends must have pity and forget her for a time. She is not a heroine; but hers is a terrible case, and might have taxed the energies of the strongest mind of her sex. I am sure that they who are impatient with her under such a severe trial, can never have realized in their minds the ordeal she has had to go through. She requires the patience and tender treatment of a child. It is true, as Bright says (who is one of the tenderest-hearted creatures I know), that *we* know but imperfectly what a mother suffers in such a case."

To the same friend, a fortnight later, he says:[1] —"I cannot prove as good as my word by coming to town this week, but my poor wife will accompany me on Monday. She is as helpless as one of her young children, and requires as much forbearance and kindness. God knows how much the comfort and regularity of her domestic life have always been made subservient, willingly and meekly so, to my political engagements, without one atom of ambition to profit by the privileges which to some natures offer a kind of compensation for family discomfort. And, bearing this in view, I have from the moment that this terrible blow fell on us, determined to make every other claim on my time and attention subordinate (even to the giving up of my seat) to the task of mitigating her sufferings. No other human

[1] *To Joseph Parkes*, June 4, 1856.

1856.
ÆT. 52.

being but myself can afford her the slightest relief. I sometimes doubt whether for the next six months I shall be able to leave her for twenty-four hours together."

He repeats with the helpless iteration of an incurable grief, how hard is the case of a mother, who had not seen her son waste gradually away as she tended his death-bed, but who suddenly and in a moment stumbled over his corpse as she passed cheerfully from room to room. She never to the last submitted to the blow with the graces of resignation, and hence she never had the comparative solace that might have come either from religion or from reason. To the end she fought against her fate. "But if there be one act of contumacy," Cobden wrote in tender deprecation, "which God would pardon beyond all others in his creatures, it is surely that which springs from the excessive affection of a mother for her child."

The external trifles of life were in sombre accord with the tragedy that overshadowed their hearts. All things, small as well as great, in which Cobden was concerned, seemed to go wrong. His best cows lost their calves. The fruit in the orchard was all blighted. A fine crop of hay lay spoiling in the rain. Deeper than these vexations was his anxious concern for Mr. Bright. For eighteen years almost without an interval Mr. Bright had been at work in public causes. The labour of preparation and advocacy would in itself have been enormous, but the strain was peculiarly intensified by the fact that the labour was pursued in face of misrepresentation and obloquy such as few English statesmen have ever had to endure. At a time when repose would under any circumstances have become necessary, instead of repose came the violent excitement of the Russian

1856. Æt. 52.

War. Mr. Bright's health gave way, and many of his friends began to fear that he was permanently disabled. "I think of him," Cobden wrote, "with more serious apprehension than he is aware of." And his correspondence with their common friends shows the reality of his solicitude. This is an extract from one of his letters of that time:—"I have always had a sort of selfish share in Bright's career, for I have felt as though, when passing the zenith of life, I was handing over every principle and cause I had most at heart to the advocacy of one, not only younger and more energetic, but with gifts of natural eloquence to which I never pretended. . . . Perhaps there never were two men who lived in such transparent intimacy of mind as Bright and myself. Next to the loss of my boy, I have had no sorrow so constant and great as from his illness. The two together make me feel quite unnerved, and I seem to be always feeling about in my mind for an excuse for quitting the public scene. Bright's loss, if permanent, is a public calamity. If you could take the opinion of the whole House, he would be pronounced, by a large majority, to combine more earnestness, courage, honesty, and eloquence, than any other man. But we will not speak of him as of the past. God grant that he may recover!"[1]

Mr. Bright and his family were staying in the autumn of this year at Llandudno. It happened that a friend, about the same time, offered the use of her house in the neighbourhood of Bangor to Cobden. Mrs. Cobden seemed to be falling into a settled torpor, which alarmed her husband. Dreading the winter gloom and the association of home, he resolved to try a great change, and accepting his friend's offer, he went with his family to Wales.

[1] *To Joseph Parkes*, Nov. 11, 1856.

Here the clouds slowly began to show a rift. Mr. Bright and he paid one another visits, with the bargain exacted by Cobden that not a word should be exchanged about politics. He was slightly reassured as to his friend's condition. At home there were signs of better things. Everybody about them was kind and neighbourly. Friendly offices were pressed on the suffering mother by good women, "such indeed," says Cobden, "as are found in the middle and upper ranks in every corner of Britain." Mrs. Cobden roused herself to talk her own Welsh among the poor people who knew no other language, and who brightened up and became confidential the moment that they were addressed in their own tongue. Her little children gradually became a diversion and resource. But her husband could not permit himself to do more than hope that she was perhaps recovering. His own mind began to recover its tone, and his interest in public affairs to revive. Lord Brougham among others was very anxious to impress upon him the doctrine that it is Work only, and not Time, that can relieve the mind from the pressure of bereavement. "If I had only my own case to consult," Cobden said, "I would at once return to the duties of life, and try to escape from the thoughts of the past in the hard labour and turmoil of politics." 1856. ÆT. 52.

Of the prospects of domestic legislation, he writes:—"I suppose the work to be attempted next session is law reform; and nothing is more pressing. Thorough measures, such as simplifying the sale of land up to something like the Irish Encumbered Estates standard, shall have my hearty support as industriously in the way of votes as if I were in the Government. But I tell you candidly, I think this work would be better done if the Tories were in,

1856. Æt. 52.

The Lords rule this land in ordinary times supremely. It is only once in ten or twenty years that with a great effort the country thrusts them off from some bone of contention, but merely to leave them in possession of the rest of the carcass as securely as ever. Now the Lords look on the Tories as their party. They know that to enable them to keep office something must be done, and as they cannot satisfy the Radicals in organic questions, they strain a point to let their men have the credit of some thorough practical reforms of the law and administration. Hence the good round measure of Chancery Reform which the Peers passed for the Derby-Disraeli Government. And depend on it, if we were now on the left-hand side of the Speaker's chair again, there would be a better measure of law reform passed than we are likely to see next session."[1]

Nowhere can prospects be calculated with so little certainty as in Parliamentary politics. The session for which Cobden thus anticipated such tranquil occupation, proved to be one of the most striking landmarks in his history.

[1] *To J. Parkes*, Dec. 11, 1856.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHINESE AFFAIRS—COBDEN'S MOTION —THE DISSOLUTION

1857. Æt. 53.

The first week of the new year (1857) found Cobden back again at Dunford; but at the end of January he went with his wife to a hydropathic establishment at Richmond. "I have little sympathy myself," he said, "with the hydropathic superstition; but the simple diet and regular hours are always in favour of health." As it happened he had, besides simple diet and quiet hours, something which to natures such as his is the most favourable of all conditions to sound health, I mean the excitement of vigorous interest in a great public cause.

Certain transactions in China had for some time attracted his vigilant attention, and they now occupied him to the exclusion of everything else. In his pamphlet on the Second Burmese War, Cobden had shown the danger and injustice of our accepted policy towards the weak nations of the East. A war had now broken out in China which illustrated the same principles in a still more striking way. Sir John Bowring, the Governor of Hong-Kong, was an old friend of Cobden's, a member of the Peace Society, and one of the earliest agitators against the Corn Law. But he was a man without practical judgment, and he became responsible for one of the

1857. Æt. 53.

worst of the Chinese wars. The Chinese boarded the *Arrow*, and rescued twelve of their countrymen from it on a charge of piracy. The British Consul protested on the ground that malfeasants on board a British ship should not be seized, but should be demanded from the Consul. Nine men were returned at once. Bowring sent word that unless the whole of the men were returned within eight-and-forty hours, with apologies for the past and pledges for the future, the English men-of-war would begin operations. On a certain day the whole of the men were returned, with a protest from the Chinese governor that the ship was not a British ship, and that therefore he was not bound to demand his malfeasants from the Consul. The Chinese governor was perfectly in the right, Bowring's contention was an absolute error from beginning to end.[1] The *Arrow* was not a British ship. Its licence had expired. Even if this had not been so, the Hong-Kong agents had no power to give a licence to a Chinese shipowner protecting him against his own Government. The case stood thus then. Bowring had made a claim which was legally untenable. The Chinese governor, while declaring it illegal, acquiesced in the demand. Yet the day after the whole of the men had been given up, naval and military operations were begun, a great number of Chinese junks were destroyed, the suburbs of Canton were burnt and battered down,

[1] Mr. Ashley's account of this transaction (*Life of Palmerston*, ii. 344) is too condensed to be quite accurate. If a man of Mr. Ashley's industry and character is not careful to see the facts of such cases precisely and as they were, we cannot wonder at the rough and ready style in which the public is wont to take the unsifted official stories for granted, whenever a British agent launches his country into one of these scandalous wars.

1857.
ÆT. 53.

the town was shelled, and this iniquitous devastation was the beginning of a long and costly war.

The course which the Government at home ought to have taken was this. Bowring ought to have been recalled; in time it is to be hoped that public opinion will insist that agents who are guilty of action of this kind shall not only be recalled, but shall be formally disgraced and explicitly punished. His recall would have been justified even by the opinion of that day or of this. It was not, however, to be expected from the statesman whose politics never got beyond *Civis Romanus*, especially when he was dealing with a very weak Power. The Government resolved to support Bowring. As usual, they shifted the ground from the particular to the general; if the Chinese were right about the *Arrow*, they were wrong about something else; if legality did not exactly justify violence, it was at any rate required by policy; orientals mistake justice for fear; and so on through the string of well-worn sophisms, which are always pursued in connexion with such affairs.

To Cobden, as we may suppose, the whole transaction seemed worthy of condemnation on every ground. Bowring's demand was illegal, and ought not to have been made. If this was doubtful, at any rate Bowring's violent action was precipitate. It was a resort in the first instance to measures which would hardly have been justifiable in the last instance. If there were general grievances against the Chinese, why not make joint representations with France and the United States, instead of stumbling into a quarrel in which we had not a leg to stand upon, and beginning a war for which in the opinion of our best lawyers there was no proper ground.[1]

[1] Lord Elgin, who was sent out to carry on the war, says in

1857. ÆT. 53.

The chance of reversing the course of policy depended as usual on the accidents of party combination. In a letter to Mr. Lindsay written in the last month of 1856, Cobden describes the state of parties at that time. "It is unlike," he said, "everything I have witnessed for the last fifteen years. There seems to be no party having an intelligible principle or policy in which any considerable body out-of-doors takes an interest. The two sides of the House no longer represent opposing parties—unless, indeed, it may be said that our leader is at heart an aristocratic Tory, while the chief of the Opposition is, if anything, a democratic Radical. Of this a considerable number on the Tory side seem to be shrewdly aware, for they evince no desire to turn out Palmerston, in whom they have more confidence than in Disraeli." Under these circumstances, however, the position of a Minister must always be precarious, for the absence of definitely antagonistic policies places him at the mercy of fortuitous personal coalitions. One of these coalitions came into existence now. The Peelites were only following the tradition of their master in condemning a precipitate and useless war. Mr. Disraeli and his friends played the official part of an Opposition in censuring an Administration. Lord John Russell obeyed an honest instinct for justice. All these sections resolved to support Cobden. It was on the 26th of February that Cobden brought forward a

his diary: "I have hardly alluded in my ultimatum to that wretched question of the *Arrow*, which is a scandal to us, and is so considered, I have reason to know, by all except the few who are personally compromised." *Letters and Journals*, p. 209. "It is impossible to read the blue-books," he says elsewhere, "without feeling that we have often acted towards the Chinese in a manner which it is very difficult to justify" (p. 185). See also pp. 191, 218, etc. etc.

1857.
ÆT. 53.

motion to the effect that without expressing an opinion on the causes of complaint arising from non-fulfilment of the treaty of 1842, the House thought the late violent measures at Canton not justified by the papers, and that a Select Committee should inquire into the commercial relations with China. This enabled him to cover the whole ground of our policy in that country. He did so in one of the most masterly of his speeches; it was closely argued, full of matter, without an accent of passion, unanswerable on the special case, and thoroughly broad and statesmanlike in general views.[1] The House was profoundly impressed. After a long debate, in which Lord Palmerston taunted Cobden with his un-English spirit, and wondered how he could have thought of attacking an old friend like Bowring, the division was taken. There was a majority of sixteen against the Government. The sixteen would have been sixty, it was said, if Lord Derby's party had held together. That so many of them were found on Cobden's side, showed that so far as opinion and conviction went, the minority was very small indeed. But, as we are always seeing, it is the tendency of party government to throw opinion and conviction too often into a secondary place. Mr. Gladstone said that if the division had been taken immediately after the speeches of Cobden and Lord John Russell, the motion would have been carried by a majority so overwhelming that the Minister could not have ventured to appeal to the country against it. The interval allowed the old party considerations to resume their usual force. As it was, Lord Palmerston, with his usual acuteness and courage of judgment, determined to dissolve Parliament. Mr. Bright was now at Rome. "I

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 121-156.

1857. Æt. 53. need not tell you," he wrote to Cobden, "how greatly pleased I was with the news, and especially that the blow was given by your hand." The blow was unhappily to be returned with interest.

The country had not long been engaged in the heat and turmoil of the general election, before Cobden detected ominous signs. He had long before resolved to abandon his seat for the West Riding. It was too plain that he had no chance. His views on education alienated one section, and his views on the Russian War had alienated all sections. It was thought that Huddersfield was the borough where the feeling of which Mr. Baines was the chief exponent, and which Cobden had offended, was least formidable. So to Huddersfield he went. But he was not more active for himself, than he was on behalf of his absent comrade. It is easy to explain the feeling that was abroad. Under our system there is little tolerance for individual dissent, and new principles make their way against artificial difficulties of desperate force. People said that Cobden and his friends had shown themselves perversely independent of the Minister. They had been a thorn in the side of three Liberal Governments. They had been openly mutinous under Lord John Russell; they had opposed Lord Aberdeen; they had violently quarrelled with Lord Palmerston. They had committed the unpardonable offence of leading their enemies to turn out their friends. All this was narrow, undiscriminating, and ungenerous. In time men became ashamed of such criticism, but for the hour it was fatal. Cobden moved the vast audience of the Free Trade Hall to its depths by an eloquent and touching vindication of Mr. Bright, with whom, as he told them, he had lived in the most transparent intimacy of mind

1857.
ÆT. 53.

that two human beings ever enjoyed together. When he spoke of Mr. Bright's health—"impaired in that organ which excites feelings of awe and of the utmost commiseration for him on the part of all right-minded men"—his emotion almost overpowered him, and shook the soul of his hearers.[1] But the practical conclusion was foregone. He wrote hasty notes to inform Mrs. Cobden of his fears.

"*Manchester, March* 17.—I hear very discouraging accounts of Bright and Gibson. There have been many defections, and unless our friends are giving themselves needless alarm, I fear the chances are greatly against us. The cause chiefly assigned is less an alteration of opinion than a feeling of resistance towards the ghost of the League, which still persists in haunting Newall's Buildings, and, as is alleged, dictates to Manchester. I was always of opinion that it would have been much better to have abolished the whole concern and taken up new quarters, and a new name. But it is too late to say anything about it now, and, indeed, the less said the better. I have determined to go to Huddersfield. I attend a great meeting this evening in the Free Trade Hall, and to-morrow shall proceed to Huddersfield."

"*Huddersfield, March* 24.—I am dragged about all the day through mud and mire canvassing, and hardly know whether I can win. I don't think they are by any means safe at Manchester. I go over there again to-morrow, to attend a meeting in the Free Trade Hall."

"*March* 25.—We have just had the nomination. I was dragged to the hustings and obliged to speak, very much against my inclination. We had the

[1] See *Speeches*, ii. 74.

1857. Æt. 53. show of hands. The polling is to-morrow. Our friends are in better spirits every hour, but I am still very doubtful. *If I win*, I will telegraph to London, and request a letter to be sent by to-morrow's post to you. So if you do not hear at the same time as you get this, conclude that I have lost."

No telegram was sent, for Cobden was beaten. A Tory had carried the borough not long before, and now the combination of Tories with Palmerstonian Whigs was doubly irresistible. Cobden only polled 590 votes, against 823 for his opponent. At Manchester Mr. Gibson and Mr. Bright were defeated, and the latter of them was at the bottom of the poll.[1] Fox was thrown out at Oldham and Miall at Rochdale. Lord Palmerston's victory was complete, and the Manchester School was routed. Nothing had been seen like it since the disappearance of the Peace Whigs in 1812, when Brougham, Romilly, Tierney, Lamb, and Horner all lost their seats.

Mr. Bright wrote to Cobden from Rome during the elections. He had, he said sarcastically, just been reading Bulwer's *Rienzi*, and so he was prepared for ignorance, scurrility, selfishness, ingratitude, and all the other unpleasant qualities that every honest politician must meet with. When the news of the great reverse reached him, he took it with a certain composure. He put the case to Cobden, exactly as to a historical observer five-and-twenty years later it would seem that it ought to have been put.

"VENICE, *April* 16.

"MY DEAR COBDEN,

"I have been intending to write to you from day to day since I received your letter. It was most

[1] Sir J. Potter, 8368; Turner, 7854; Gibson, 5588; Bright, 5458.

1857.
ÆT. 53.

refreshing to me to read it, although its topics were not of the most pleasing, but it came at the right time, and it said the right thing, and was just such as I needed. . . .

"In the sudden break-up of the 'School' of which we have been the chief professors, we may learn how far we have been, and are ahead, of the public opinion of our time. We purpose not to make a trade of politics, and not to use as may best suit us the ignorance and the prejudices of our countrymen for our own advantage, but rather to try to square the policy of the country with the maxims of common sense and of a plain morality. The country is not yet ripe for this, but it is far nearer being so than at any former period, and I shall not despair of a revolution in opinion which shall within a few years greatly change the aspect of affairs with reference to our Foreign policy. During the comparatively short period since we entered public life, see what has been done. Through our labours mainly the whole creed of millions of people, and of the statesmen of our day, has been totally changed on all the questions which affect commerce, and customs duties, and taxation. They now agree to repudiate as folly, what, twenty years ago, they accepted as wisdom. Look again at our Colonial policy. Through the labours of Molesworth, Roebuck, and Hume, more recently supported by us, and by Gladstone, every article in the creed which directed our Colonial policy has been abandoned, and now men actually abhor the notion of undertaking the government of the Colonies; on the contrary, they give to every Colony that asks for it, a Constitution as democratic as that which exists in the United States.

"Turn to the question of Parliamentary Reform.

1857. ÆT. 53.

'Finality' is stoutly repudiated, not by Lord John Russell alone, but by the Tories. I observe that at the recent elections, Tories have repeatedly admitted that there must be Parliamentary Reform, and that they will not oppose a moderate dose of it; and I suppose something before long will be done, not so real as we wish, but something that will make things move a little.

"But if on Commercial legislation, on Colonial policy, on questions of Suffrage, and I might have added on questions of Church, for a revolution in opinion is apparent there also, we see this remarkable change, why should we despair of bringing about an equally great change in the sentiments of the people with regard to foreign affairs? Palmerston and his press are at the bottom of the excitement that has lately prevailed; he will not last long as Minister or as man. I see no one ready to accept his mantle when it drops from him. Ten years hence, those who live so long may see a complete change on the questions on which the public mind has been recently so active and so much mistaken.

"This is bringing philosophy to comfort us in our misfortunes, you will say, and does not mend the present, and it is true enough, but it is just the line of reasoning, I doubt not, which has presented itself to your mind when free from the momentary vexation caused by recent events. I am the least unfortunate of our small section, for a year of idleness and of ill-health has made absence from Parliament familiar to me, and I have contemplated resigning my seat since the beginning of 1856. Personally, therefore, to be out is neither strange nor unpleasant, and I am surprised how very little I have cared about the matter on my own account. I hope you can feel somewhat as I do, conscious that we

1857. ÆT. 53.

are ostracised because our political creed is in advance of, and our political morality higher than, that of the people for whom we have given up the incessant labours of nearly twenty years. Time will show, and a long time will not be needed to show, the hollowness of the imposture which now rules. Its face may be of brass, but its feet are of clay. . . .

"It is strange after so much experience that we should be disappointed that opinion goes on so slowly. We have taught what is true in our 'School,' but the discipline was a little too severe for the scholars. Disraeli will say he was right: we are hardly of the English type, and success, political and personal success, cannot afford to reject the use which may be made of ignorance and prejudice among a people. This is his doctrine, and with his views it is true; but as we did not seek personal objects it is not true of us. If we are rejected for peace and for truth, we stand higher before the world and for the future than if we mingled with the patient mediocrities which compose the present Cabinet. . . . I hope the clouds may break, and that sunshine may come again.

"Ever yours very sincerely,

"JOHN BRIGHT."

After the elections were over, Cobden went to his home in Sussex, and there he remained in retirement for nearly two years. His correspondence shows how sharply he felt the defeat.

To Mr. Moffatt, he writes :—

"*April* 7.—I find a retreat to this drowsy neighbourhood very necessary for my health. I overdid it, in trying to canvass Huddersfield and Manchester at the same time, and was almost afraid

1857. my head was giving way. However, my old medicine, sleep, has nearly restored me. But I am determined to keep out of the ring for the present. It suits me on private and domestic grounds to have been beaten at Huddersfield (where my good friends ought not to have taken me), and although the dose is a little nauseous, the medicine will ultimately be of service to me. But I am persecuted with innumerable letters from kind people, who have taken up the notion that I must require encouragement and condolence. And they have all sorts of projects ready cut and dry for me, as if I could begin a life of agitation again, and repeat the labours of my prime now that I am past the zenith.

ÆT. 53.

"The only incident of the election which hangs about me with a permanent feeling of irritability, is the atrocious treatment Bright has received from the people at Manchester. They are mainly indebted to him for the prosperity which has converted a majority into little better than Tories, and now the base snobs kick away the ladder! I find my scorn boiling over constantly, and can hardly keep my hands, or rather my pen, off them. The case of Gibson is different. He could not have been without the expectation that some day an end would be put to a connexion for which there was no special fitness; and to have sat for nearly eighteen years for Manchester has given him a position which nothing can take away. I do not, however, think he deserved to be left in a minority. But Bright's case is very different. He was one of themselves. You know how valiantly he defended his order against all assailants. He was an honour to his constituents. They had no grievance on account of his peace views, for they knew he was a Quaker when they elected him. To place such a man at

1857.
ÆT. 53.

the bottom of the poll, when prostrate by excessive labours in the public service, is the most atrocious specimen of political ingratitude I ever encountered. . . . I do not believe he will be affected in the way you fear by the news. He will, I believe, take it very coolly and philosophically; and I think it will prove probably the best thing that could have happened for his health."

On the same day he writes to Mr. Hargreaves:—"The secret of such a display of snobbishness and ingratitude is in the great prosperity which Lancashire enjoys, and for which it is mainly indebted to Bright; and the result has been to make a large increase to the number of Tories, and to cool down to a genteel tone the politics of the Whigs, until at last the majority find an earnest Radical not sufficiently genteel for their taste. This will go on in the north of England so long as our exports continue to increase at their present rate, and in the natural course of things more Tories will be returned."

The same humour finds vent in some words to Mr. W. S. Lindsay of this date:—

"Did my friend —— make a failure of seconding the Address? I hear so. I have never known a manufacturing representative put into cocked hat and breeches and ruffles, with a sword by his side, to make a speech for the Government, without having his head turned by the feathers and frippery. Generally they give way to a paroxysm of snobbery, and go down on their bellies, and throw dust on their heads, and fling dirt at the prominent men of their own order."

At the end of July a vacancy was made in the representation of Birmingham by the death of Mr. Muntz, and Mr. Bright was quickly chosen to fill the seat. His health seemed to have been so dangerously shaken, that Cobden expressed a natural solicitude

1857. on so speedy a return to the agitation of public life. To Mr. Parkes he wrote:—

Æt. 53.

"*August* 9, 1857.—I cannot help confessing to you my doubts whether Bright will be equal to the task which he seems bent upon undertaking without much more forbearance. If he break down again, the chances are that he is shelved for life, and may lose even the powers which he is now in secure possession of. I very much fear he allows himself to be pushed forward by others who are interested, from enjoying a reflected share of his greatness, in seeing him again in the House. But I have no reason to suppose that this is the case with his wife and family. I have said as much as I could to urge him to be quiet, but I doubt whether he has the power to divert his mind from politics. He seemed to me to be watching or speculating on the details of political movements whilst he was in Algiers or Italy, pretty much the same as when he was at home. The honest and independent course taken by the people at Birmingham, their exemption from aristocratic snobbery, and their fair appreciation of a democratic son of the people, confirm me in the opinion I have always had that the social and political state of that town is far more healthy than that of Manchester; and it arises from the fact that the industry of the hardware district is carried on by small manufacturers, employing a few men and boys each, sometimes only an apprentice or two; whilst the great capitalists in Manchester form an aristocracy, individual members of which wield an influence over sometimes two thousand persons. The former state of society is more natural and healthy in a moral and political sense. There is a freer intercourse between all classes than in the Lancashire town, where a great and impassable gulf separates the workman from his

employer. The great capitalist class formed an excellent basis for the Anti-Corn-Law movement, for they had inexhaustible purses, which they opened freely in a contest where not only their pecuniary interests but their pride as 'an order' was at stake. But I very much doubt whether such a state of society is favourable to a democratic political movement, and this view I have urged upon Wilson and Bright ever since the League was, or ought to have been, abolished. If Bright should recover his health and be able to head a party for Parliamentary Reform, in my opinion Birmingham will be a better home for him than Manchester. 1857. ÆT. 53.

"Charles Sumner has been here, and is now on his way to see De Tocqueville. We had some very long adjourned debates, as you may suppose. What a talker he is! One night, or rather morning, I had to warn him to bed at half-past one, which to us rustics is a late sitting, for at this harvest-time folks are thinking of getting up to work soon after that. But excepting for his own health's sake I would have gladly protracted our *noctes* to daylight. It is refreshing to meet with a man of his intellectual calibre and of such accomplishments, one too so capable in every way of playing a politician's part, giving up all to conscience. I really hardly know such a case. *We* can't put ourselves in such a comparison, for we have not the same temptations even had we his powers. For in this aristocratic country we know that the chief seats must be occupied by men of a given class, or their nominees. In his country every post was accessible to him, if he could only speak successfully to Bunkum."

"*July* 28. (*To Mr. Parkes.*)—Very many thanks for your thinking of me sometimes. I am deep in mangolds and pigs, and unless you brought me

1857. occasionally in contact with the great maëlstrom of politics, I should be in danger of forgetting that there are such things as Whigs and Tories in the world. Believe me I am in no hurry to get back to the House. When I saw the other day that the House sat till half-past four, I hugged myself, and looked out on the South Downs with a keener relish. The tone of Parliament is unlike anything I have ever witnessed, and I should not like to be made more closely acquainted with it. There is a spirit of servility, which cannot last; for a really manly assembly (which the House of Commons is) will recover its self-respect, and the reaction will perhaps be all the stronger from the consciousness which will one day flash upon it that it has been prostrating itself before a brazen image, as hollow as it is impudent. But I am content to wait. It is true that Sumner has offered to come and see me, and if he would stay a few days it would be well for his health, but I expect he will linger in town till he has only a day to give me. I went on Friday to dine at the Bishop of Oxford's to meet Lord Aberdeen, and slept there. The old Earl was looking older and more taciturn than usual. His clothes looked too large for his frame. I should fear he is wasting away, but his northern air, I hope, will set him up again. It is the third year I have had a long *tête-à-tête* with him, and I have always found myself much interested in a thoroughly quiet and homely intercourse with him and his host. . . .

ÆT. 53.

"In answer to your friend's inquiry about Bowring's truthfulness, you may content yourself with a general description of the *genus sentimentalist*. They are not to be depended on in political action, because they are not masters of their own reasoning powers. They sing songs or declaim about truth,

1857.
ÆT. 53.

justice, liberty, and the like, but it is only in the same artificial spirit in which they make odes to dewdrops, daisies, etc. They are just as likely to trample on one as the other, notwithstanding. There was Lamartine, the prince of the class, who mouthed so finely about international rights; and yet it has come out that he was just as ready as King or Kaiser to march an army into Italy to take a material guarantee for — liberty. See the exhibition of Thackeray at Oxford,[1] and yet he expressed sympathy to me and Bright at the Reform Club during the war. Then there is his great contrast, Dickens, for ever writing of his desire to elevate the masses and to put down insolence in high places. I saw a note from him in which he refused to sign a petition for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, on the express ground that he would not promote a deluge of printer's ink in England similar to what he had seen in America. The most reliable politicians are your wiry logicians of the Jefferson or Calhoun stamp. They may be liable to false starts, but when once you know their premises you can calculate their course and where to find them."

"*Midhurst, June* 6. (*To Mr. Ewart.*)—I must confess the proceedings of your Hon. House have done much to reconcile me to my rustication, for its tone is subservient even to sycophancy. We have had the 'Barebones Parliament,' the 'Long Parliament,' the 'Unlearned Parliament,' but the present ought to be named the 'Servile Parliament.' From such an assembly I confess I am not sorry to be excluded. There has always been until now a body of men, sometimes more and sometimes fewer in the House,

[1] At a bye-election for Oxford city (July 21) Mr. Thackeray stood against the present Lord Cardwell, and failed by the narrow difference of 67, in a gross poll of 2103.

1857. Æt. 53. who counted themselves for something better than Whigs or Tories, and who were bent on securing something for the public as the price of their support of the more Liberal section of the aristocracy. These men, whether numbering thirty or eighty, were the pioneers of every good work. As a party they seem no longer to have an existence in this Parliament. When they reappear, and the public have recovered their taste for earnest politics, I hope I shall be of their number; but till then the House of Commons would not suit me, or I suit it.

"*Dec.* 3. (*To Mr. Moffatt.*)—It is very kind and friendly in you, as usual, to think of me. This post has also brought a letter from Lancashire, saying some of the leaders at Ashton would wish me to succeed to poor Hindley. But I have resolved neither to stand nor sit for any place; and this resolution will certainly be adhered to for a year, probably for the rest of my working days. I am not sulking or shamming, but acting from motives of a personal nature, and which no political considerations will be sufficiently powerful to overcome. If half a dozen constituencies were to offer to return me free of expense I should decline them all. I shall be glad, should you at any time hear of any movement in my favour, if you will discourage it, without giving me occasion to offer explanations which are painful to me. The truth is I cannot leave home for forty-eight hours, and preserve that tranquillity and elasticity of spirit which is necessary to success in public life. Under the circumstances, I am therefore useless anywhere but in my family. There might have been a state of things, indeed there has been, when I sacrificed every domestic consideration for public duty; but there is now no motive or justification for my doing so."

1857.
Æt. 53.

The actual life of the House of Commons which has invincible attractions for so many men, seems to have had no particular charm to Cobden. At the beginning of the session of 1857 he described to a friend the disagreeable effect upon him of bad air and long speeches. "I don't know whether you feel yourself similarly affected by the air of the House, but after sitting there for two or three hours I find my head useless for any other purpose but aching. I find my brain throbbing, as though it were ready to burst; and the pain returns upon me as soon as I awake in the morning. It seems as if the air were dried and cooked to such an extent as to rob it of its vital properties. My reasoning powers are in abeyance while under the roof of the House, and if the symptoms continue and no remedy be called for by others, likely to effect a change, I shall seriously consider whether I ought to continue to hold a trust which I am rendered physically and mentally incapable of fulfilling."

"I came away on Tuesday," he continues, "after listening for two hours and a half to Disraeli. I wish there could be some Bessemer's power invented for shortening the time of speaking in the House. My belief, after a long experience, is that a man may say all that he ought to utter at one 'standing' in an hour, excepting a Budget speech or a Government explanation, when documents are read. The Sermon on the Mount may be read in twenty minutes; the Lord's Prayer takes one minute to repeat; Franklin and Washington never spoke more than ten minutes at a time."

In the autumn of 1857 there was some prospect of a vacancy for the borough of Finsbury, and a movement was started in favour of Cobden as a candidate. Nothing came of it, and it is doubtful,

1857. Æt. 53.

as we shall presently see, whether at that moment his private interests would have allowed him to return to public life. In the beginning of 1858 he received one of the pleasantest of social compliments, in his election as a member of the Athenæum Club by the special favour of the Committee. In the course of the same year his brother, Frederick, died at Dunford. He had suffered such excruciating torture for some time past that to himself death was almost welcome, but Cobden may well have felt a sharp pang at the loss of one to whom he had been all his life bound by the ties of so affectionate an intimacy.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE INDIAN MUTINY—PRIVATE AFFAIRS—SECOND JOURNEY TO AMERICA

1857.
ÆT. 53.

THE elections had barely taken place before the country was thrilled from end to end as it had been on no occasion before, by the appalling horrors of the Indian Mutiny. Cobden had always watched the affairs of this great dependency with jealous and unfriendly eye. As a military and despotic Government; as an acquisition of impolitic violence and fraud; as the seat of unsafe finance; for these and other reasons, he had always taken his place among those, and they were much fewer then than they are now, who cannot see any advantage either to the natives or their foreign masters in this vast possession. He had said as much in the House of Commons so far back as 1853, when the renewal of the Company's Charter was under discussion. When the Mutiny came, then like every one else, he said, he could think of nothing else. Three or four of his letters will be enough to show what he had to say upon the most hideous occurrence in our history.

"*Midhurst, Oct.* 16, 1857. (*To Mr. Ashworth.*) —I thought I could have withdrawn myself for a time from public affairs, but every Indian mail quite overturns my resolution, and weans me back from my farm and my household, and makes me as much

1857. Æt. 53.

a politician in thought and feeling as ever. And yet I confess to you that this crisis in the East makes me very grateful for the accident which released me from my Parliamentary duties, and thereby relieved me from the necessity of making any public declaration of opinion on the subject; for the more I reflect on it, the less do I feel able to take any part which would harmonize with the views and prejudices of the British public.

"I am, and always have been, of opinion (see the enclosed extract from *Hansard*) that we have attempted an impossibility in giving ourselves to the task of governing one hundred millions of Asiatics. God and His visible natural laws have opposed insuperable obstacles to the success of such a scheme. But if the plan were practicable at the great cost and risk which we *now* see to be inseparable from it, what advantage can it confer on ourselves? We all know the motive which took the East India Company to Asia—monopoly, not merely as towards foreigners, but against the rest of their own countrymen. But now that the trade of Hindoostan is thrown open to all the world on equal terms, what exclusive advantage can we derive to compensate for all the trouble, cost, and risk of ruling over such a people?—a people which has shown itself, after a century of contact with us, to be capable of crimes which would revolt any savage tribe of whom we read in Dr. Livingstone's narrative, and which had never seen a Christian or European till he penetrated among them.

"The religious people who now tell us that we must hold India to convert it, ought, I should think, to be convinced by what has passed that sending red coats as well as black to Christianize a people is not the most likely way to insure the blessing of God on our missionary efforts.

1857.
ÆT. 53.

"I am aware that it is quite useless to preach these doctrines in the present temper of the people of this country; but if forced to appear in public to offer my opinion on the topics of the day, I could not ignore this greatest of all texts, and therefore I cling to my shell here because I know that this is not the moment to give utterance to my ideas with any chance of doing good.

"Unfortunately for me I can't even co-operate with those who seek to 'reform' India, for I have no faith in the power of England to govern that country at all permanently; and though I should like to see the Company abolished—because that is a screen between the English nation and a full sight of its awful responsibilities—yet I do not believe in the possibility of the Crown governing India under the control of Parliament. If the House of Commons were to renounce all responsibility for domestic legislation, and give itself exclusively to the task of governing one hundred millions of Asiatics, it would fail. Hindoostan must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. Its people will prefer to be ruled badly—*according to our notions*—by its own colour, kith and kin, than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes.

"These, however, are, I confess, opinions of a somewhat abstract kind, and not adapted for the practical work of the day. What is to be done now? Put down the military revolt in justice to the peaceable population, who are at the mercy of the armed mutineers. It is our duty to do so. We can do it, and I have no doubt it will be done. But then comes our difficulty. With the experience of the present year we can never trust a native force with arms again, with the feelings of security which we

1857. formerly indulged. Who will live in the interior of India in future, beyond the range of our forts or the sound of the regimental drum? Certainly no one with wife and children to love and care for. Yet we cannot possibly administer the affairs of that country without a native force, and we are now actually raising an army of Sikhs, the most warlike of our subjects in all Asia, whom we disarmed when we took possession of the country, and of whom Lord Dalhousie said, in a letter, not ten years ago, that every man was against us!

ÆT. 53.

"No; there is no future but trouble and loss and disappointment and, I fear, crime in India, and they are doing the people of this country the greatest service who tell them the honest truth according to their convictions, and prepare them for abandoning at some future time the thankless and impossible task."

"*August* 24. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—If we could meet, I should be glad to have a whole week's adjourned debates on public matters with you; and I could write you long letters too, but somehow I always feel myself restrained by the fear that my correspondence does you harm by keeping the brain needlessly on the old scent. I wish you to discard politics from your thoughts; how then can I with consistency dose you with my political speculations? Besides, to tell you the truth, I can find nothing very cheerful to remark upon in relation to public matters. The proceedings of the House have ceased to interest me; and when I glance at the conclusion of the reports, and sometimes read 'adjourned at a quarter to three o'clock,' I hug myself with delight at the recollection that I am not one of the *dramatis personæ* of the humiliating performance.

"The only subject that binds my attention fast to

1857. ÆT. 53.

the newspapers is this horrible Indian business. There has been nothing in history since the St. Domingo revolt to compare in fiendish ferocity with the atrocities by the Sepoys upon the women and children who have fallen into their hands. One stands aghast and dumbfoundered at the reflection that after a century of intercourse with us, the natives of India suddenly exhibit themselves greater savages than any of the North American Indians who have been brought into contact with the white race. It is clear that they cannot have been inspired with either love or respect by what they have seen of the English. There must be a fierce spirit of resentment, not unmixed with contempt for the ruling class, pervading the native mind. From the moment that I had satisfied myself that a feeling of alienation was constantly *increasing* with both the natives and the English (we had some striking evidence to this effect before our Committee in 1853), I made up my mind that it must end in trouble sooner or later. It is impossible that a people can permanently be used for their own obvious and conscious degradation. The entire scheme of our Indian rule is based upon the assumption that the natives will be the willing instruments of their own humiliation. Nay, so confident are we in this faith, that we offer them the light of Christianity and a free press, and still believe that they will not have wit enough to measure their rights by our own standard.

"Chance has thrown me in the society of some ladies who have lately returned from India, where they were accustomed to barrack life, their husbands being officers in native regiments. I find the common epithet applied to our fellow-subjects in Hindoostan is *nigger*. One of these ladies took some credit for her condescension in allowing a native officer,

1857. Æt. 53.

answering to the rank of a subaltern, to sit down in her presence when he came for orders to her husband. All this might have been borne, though with difficulty, if the English with whom the natives came in contact displayed exalted virtues and high intellectual powers. But I fear the traits most conspicuous in our countrymen have been of a very different character. A low morale and an absence of mental energy have been the most conspicuous faults of the British officers, and the business of the regiments has more and more fallen into the hands of the natives. What is now witnessed in India—the assassination and massacres on one side, and the wholesale executions on the other—must for ever perpetuate and deepen this feeling of alienation.[1]

"I can see nothing but increased difficulties in future in consequence of the almost indiscriminate slaughter with which every commissioned officer and his drum-head court are visiting the Sepoys that fall into their power. Unless this is persevered in until the 100,000 mutineers are hung up, the only effect will be to convert those who escape into worse assassins and incendiaries than before. How are we to maintain despotic sway in future over 100,000,000 of Asiatics (for it must be undisguised despotism henceforth) and preserve our own freedom at home? Will it be possible to find a sufficient number of recruits in England to keep up a sufficient army for this purpose?

[1] Almost on the very same day Lord Elgin wrote in his Journal: —"It is a terrible business, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman since I came to the East heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the object."—*Lord Elgin's Journals*, p. 199. (August 21, 1857.) On March 29, 1858, there is a similar entry: —"The truth is that the whole world just now are raving mad with a passion for killing and slaying."

1857.
ÆT. 53.

"These are questions that I shall not answer at present, but I confess to you that I have no faith in the doctrine that by any possible reforms we can govern India well, or continue to hold it permanently. God and Nature have put a visible and insuperable obstacle in the way of our rash and audacious scheme. And if it be true, as even Voltaire believed it to be, that there is 'un Dieu rétributeur et vengeur,' the deeds perpetrated by the British in times past, and still more the bloody deeds now being enacted, and which all arise from our own original aggression upon distant and unoffending communities, will be visited with unerring justice upon us or our children. But I am sinning against my own rule in thus venting my croakings upon you. . . .

"*P.S.*—You hint at the possibility of Manchester taking me in case of poor Potter's death. I don't think the offer will ever be made, but I am quite sure that there is no demonstration of the kind that would induce me (apart from my determination not at present to stand for any place) to put myself in the hands of the people who without more cause then than now struck down men whose politics are identically my own. To confess my honest belief, I regard the Manchester constituency, now that their gross pocket question is settled, as a very unsound, and to us a very unsafe body."

September 22. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I am glad to see your handwriting again. Although I knew our minds were busy in one and the same direction, yet I abstained from sending you my cogitations, for I was fearful of adding fuel to fire. These Indian horrors give me a perpetual shudder. The awful atrocities perpetrated upon women and children almost give rise to the impious doubt whether this world is under the

1857. ÆT. 53. government of an all-wise and just Providence. What crime had they committed to merit the infliction of tortures and death? Verily the sins of the fathers have been visited on the children to the third and fourth generations! And how can it be otherwise in the case of a nation? For if a collective crime be perpetrated, and a community be visited with retributive justice, even an hour after the commission of the deed, those who have entered life in the interval must participate in the penalty. We can see that it must be so, but not that it ought to be.

"These fiendish outrages upon the defenceless—the propensity displayed in so many places to unparalleled cruelties—have amazed me more than anything that ever occurred in my time. We have read of something of the kind in St. Domingo, in the French Revolution, and in the revolt of the Polish peasants, but in our time nothing like it has happened, and I would not have believed that any tribe of men which had been in contact with civilized life could have committed such barbarities. But we seem in danger of forgetting our own Christianity, and descending to a level with these monsters who have startled the world with their deeds. It is terrible to see our middle-class journals and speakers calling for the destruction of Delhi, and the indiscriminate massacre of prisoners. Leaving humanity out of the question, nothing could have been more impolitic than the wholesale execution of common soldiers with which we attempted from the first to put down the rebellion. Had it been a mutiny of a company or a regiment, it would have been of doubtful policy to hang or blow from the guns all the *privates* concerned. But when an entire army of 100,000 men have planted the standard of revolt, it is no longer a mutiny, but a rebellion and civil war. To attempt

1857.
ÆT. 53.

to hang all that fall into our power can only lead to reprisals and wholesale carnage on both sides.

"Did you observe that the men who swam ashore at Cawnpore after the boats, in which were the garrison who had been promised a safe passage, had been treacherously sunk, were blown from the guns on successive days, no doubt in imitation of our treatment of the Sepoys? To read the letters of our officers at the commencement of the outbreak, it seemed as if every subaltern had the power to hang or shoot as many natives as he pleased, and they spoke of the work of blood with as much levity as if they were hunting wild animals. The last accounts would lead one to fear that God is not favouring our cause, and that too many of our countrymen are meeting the fate which was intended for the natives.

"But the future—what is in the distance? The most certain and immediate result is that we shall have a bankrupt empire of 150 millions of people on our backs. The end of this year will leave the Company minus not much short of 100 millions sterling, including guaranteed railways, etc. And then comes all the sacrifices of life and treasure which we shall make to put down the rebellion and reconquer India. And nobody asks what benefit we shall derive from our success! You know my opinion of old: that I never could feel any enthusiasm for the reform of our Indian Government, for I failed to satisfy myself that it was possible for us to rule that vast empire with advantage to its people or ourselves. I now regard the task as utterly hopeless. Recent and present events are placing an impassable gulf between the races. Conquerors and conquered can never live together again with confidence or comfort. It will be a happy day when England has not an acre of territory in Continental Asia. But

1857. Æt. 53. how such a state of things is to be brought about is more than I can tell. I bless my stars that I am not in a position to be obliged to give public utterance to my views on the all-absorbing topic of the day, for I could not do justice to my own convictions and possess the confidence of any constituency in the kingdom. For where do we find even an individual who is not imbued with the notion that England would sink to ruin if she were deprived of her Indian Empire? Leave me, then, to my pigs and sheep, which are not labouring under any such delusions. . . ."

"*October* 18. (*To Colonel Fitzmayer.*)—Do we find that Government and Parliament acquit themselves so well in domestic matters that they have a surplus of efficiency and energy for Hindoostan? Shall we give education to India, or reform its criminals, or abate its crime, or moderate its religious bigotry and intolerance? Can we do these things at home? If a Board of Works can't give us a common sewer for London, is it likely to cover India with canals for irrigation? If Catholic and Protestant can't live together in Belfast, excepting under something like martial law, are we the people to teach Christian charity and toleration to the Hindoos? With such views as mine, what am I to do in public life in the midst of all this excitement and enthusiasm for reconquering and *Christianizing* India? I confess I think myself lucky that I can, with a fair plea, exempt myself from the task of speaking at all in public on the subject, for not having the responsible trust of M.P., I am not bound to shock people with my sentiments. For a politician of my principles there is really no standing-ground. The manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire look upon India and China as a field of enterprise which can only be kept open to them by force, and indeed they are

1857.
Æt. 53.

willing, apparently, to be at all the cost of holding open the door of the whole of Asia, for the rest of the world to trade on the same terms as themselves. How few of those who fought for the repeal of the Corn Law really understand the full meaning of Free Trade principles! If you talk to our Lancashire friends, they argue that unless we occupied India there would be no trade with that country, or that somebody else would monopolize it, forgetting that this is the old Protectionist theory which they used formerly to ridicule. India was a great centre and source of commerce for the civilized world before Englishmen took to wearing breeches, and it was the renown of its wealth and productiveness which first attracted us there. I am by no means so clear as some people, that we have added greatly to its commerce. Certainly the trade of European countries has increased in a greater ratio than that of India during the last century.

"However, I have wearied you with my abstractions. The practical business in hand is to put down the military mutiny, which, in justice to our own subjects, we are bound to do. I fear that in the process we shall familiarize ourselves with deeds of blood which may tend to make us a cruel and sanguinary nation, and then God help Bolton or Oldham, if some day from sudden suffering its passionate multitude should set the middle classes and *their* Horse Guards at defiance; for assuredly then they who now cry for the destruction of Delhi would not be less merciful to the bricks and mortar of Lancashire."

"*Nov.* 22. (*To Mr. White, the Member for Brighton.*)— . . . You have seized upon the most important of our social and political questions in the laws affecting the transfer of land. It is astonishing

1857. ÆT. 53. that the people at large are so tacit in their submission to the perpetuation of the feudal system in this country as it affects the property in land, so long after it has been shattered to pieces in every other country except Russia. The reason is, I suppose, that the great increase of our manufacturing system has given such an expansive system of employment to the population, that the want of land as a field of investment and employment for labour has been comparatively little felt. So long as this prosperity of our manufacturers continues, there will be no great outcry against the landed monopoly. If adversity were to fall on the nation, your huge feudal properties would soon be broken up, and along with them the hereditary system of government under which we contentedly live and *thrive*. When I was travelling on the Continent, I found among the thinking part of the population in France, Italy, and Germany, a great feeling of surprise that the men who had abolished the Corn Laws had not also abolished the monopoly of land; and they were quite puzzled, and almost incredulous, when I told them that there was little feeling against our custom of primogeniture even among the rural population of England. Another reason may help to account for our indifference to the subject. We have been taught to consider our colonies as an outlet for the population, and this not by a process of expatriation to a foreign land, but by emigration to other parts of our own territory. Then there is our insular vanity, that scorns to follow the example of other countries and that lays us open to the influence of flattery, of which John Bull will accept any quantity, however coarsely laid on, in place of more substantial payment of what is honestly his due."

"*London, May* 16, 1858. (*To G. Combe.*)—

1858.
ÆT. 54.

. . . I have come to London for a few weeks, and have brought my wife and little girls. We have been staying with our friends in a succession of visits, and I have seen a little of the politicians from whom I have been so long separated.

"I am afraid our national character is being deteriorated, and our love of freedom in danger of being impaired by what is passing in India. Is it possible that we can play the part of despot and butcher there without finding our character deteriorated at home? Were not the ancient Greeks and Romans corrupted and demoralized by their Asiatic conquests, and may we not share their fate, though in a different way? Then comes the question which you have so ably put in your letter. 'What possible benefit can we derive from our Indian conquests?' I confess I take a gloomy view of our prospects in that quarter. The English people will not give up Hindoostan, any more than they did North America, without years of exhausting war.

"It is more and more my conviction that the task of governing *despotically* 150 millions of people at a distance of twelve thousand miles cannot be executed by a constitutional Government. It ought to be done, if at all, by a despot, whose rule is concentrated, and less liable to personal changes than our representative forms admit. With a change of Government every six or twelve months it is impossible that we can have a continuous plan or a real responsibility. Since I have been in London, I have heard scarcely a word about the best mode of governing the millions of India. The only talk is about the chance of turning out one Ministry and bringing in another."

"*March* 28. (*To Mr. Gilpin.*)—What a pretentious and hypocritical people we are in our dealings with

1858. Æt. 54.

the outside world! How we abuse and bully King Bomba because he will not govern his lazzaroni according to our notions of constitutionalism! But when you propose to apply a little of our love of liberty to our own fellow-subjects in India, 'Oh! oh!' is the reply you meet with in the House. Yet you would have no difficulty in carrying the cheers of the said House for any proposal to put the slaves in America or Cuba immediately on the same political level as their masters. This nation will meet with a terrible check some day, unless it makes a little better progress in the science of self-knowledge."

"*October* 30. (*To Mr. Gilpin.*)— . . . Is Klapka gone? He mentioned to me in conversation some views about our Indian massacres of private men, that I should like to be allowed to quote some day. I remember he expressed himself as a soldier with some disgust on the subject. He said the indiscriminate destruction of rank and file was unprecedented in modern times, and he stated that anybody accustomed to armies knew that when a whole regiment or army fell from its allegiance, the great body of the privates really took no active part, that they went with the officers as a matter of instinct, and that perhaps with the exception of a few violent ringleaders the rest hardly knew anything about it. In some cases a minority would in their hearts be opposed to the mutiny, but they had no choice but go with the rest. He argued that to slay all alike in the field or on the gallows was terrible."

A few months before this, Cobden had felt for an instant that he would have liked to be in the House. Mr. Gibson, who had found a seat at Ashton-under-Lyne, beat Lord Palmerston on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill (Feb. 20), and the Minister, who had returned to power in triumph

1858.
ÆT. 54.

eleven months before, suddenly saw himself compelled to resign. "When I read," said Cobden to Mr. Lindsay, "the account of Bright and Gibson walking up to the table of the House to pass sentence upon that venerable political sinner, I could not help thinking what a fine historical picture the artist missed. There was surely something more than chance in bringing back these two men to inflict summary punishment on the man who flattered himself a few months ago that he had put his heel on their political necks. For the first time I felt regret at not being there to witness that scene of retributive justice."

On the feeling between England and France which had arisen in connexion with the circumstances of the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, he wrote to his friend, Michel Chevalier:—

"*July* 13.—It is useless our pursuing the *tu quoque* argument, otherwise I should remind you that our estrangement has all sprung out of the unfortunate course pursued by your Government at the time of the Orsini horror. Never did your Emperor fall into such a mistake as to seek to widen the responsibility of that mad outrage by making it the ground of domestic legislation of a restrictive character and of diplomatic negotiation, requiring fresh safeguards from foreign Governments: all which assumed that others besides those frenzied Italians were plotting against his life. To assume that assassination had sympathizers in England, France, or elsewhere, was an insult to humanity. His policy should have been the very opposite. He should have thrust aside the injudicious advisers who recommended such a course, and should have loudly proclaimed his belief that men of all nations would equally join in condemning the devilish act: and he should have placed himself

1858. Æt. 54. under the protection of that sentiment of horror which was universally entertained, whilst he might have frankly owned that his life, like that of every other man, was at the mercy of those who chose to cast off all the restraints of reason, religion, and humanity. Such a course as this, narrowing the responsibility of the atrocious act to those who were its wicked authors, would have attracted the sympathy of the whole civilized world. But it is useless now to dwell on these reminiscences. I hope the really gallant conduct of our Queen in paying a visit to Cherbourg, and thus giving a slap in the face to those mischievous fools who are constantly raising the cry of a French invasion, will have the effect of soothing all the irritation on your side."

The second Administration of Lord Derby was formed, and Mr. Lindsay asked for Cobden's view of the new political situation. In reply he once more preached a sermon on the old text.

"*March* 23.—'The present men are more honest, and they are certainly more obliging than the last.' In this I agree with you, and it might have been said of any Tory Government as compared with any Whig one since I have been in the political ring. I remember when I came into the House in 1841, after the general election which gave Peel a majority of ninety, I found the Tories more civil in the intercourse of the lobbies and the refreshment-rooms than the Whigs. It runs through all departments. It seems as if the Whig leaders always thought it necessary to snub the Radicals, to satisfy the Tories they were not dangerous politicians. But I do not blame them, for they live by it. I do blame those advanced Liberals who allow themselves to be thus used and abused. There is no remedy but in the greater self-respect of the middle class. I fear we have been

1858.
ÆT. 54.

going the other way for the last ten years. The great prosperity of the country made Tories of us all. . . . During my experience the higher classes never stood so high in relative social and political rank, as compared with other classes, as at present. The middle class have been content with the very crumbs from their table. The more contempt a man like Palmerston (as intense an aristocrat at heart as any of them) heaped on them, the louder they cheered him. Twenty years ago, when a hundred members of the House used to muster at the call of Hume or Warburton to compel the Whigs to move on under threats of desertion, there seemed some hope of the middle class setting up for themselves; but now there is no such sign. . . .

"You ask me my view of the political situation. It is hard fate for me to be obliged to choose between Derby and Palmerston, but if compelled to do so, I should certainly prefer the former. Nothing can be so humiliating to us as a party or a nation as to see that venerable political impostor at the head of affairs. But how will you prevent his return to power? . . . Half a dozen great families meet at Walmer and dispose of the rank and file of the party, just as I do the lambs that I am now selling for your aldermen's table. And I very much doubt whether you can put an end to this ignominious state of things. Until you can, I don't think you are playing a part in any noble drama."

During this period of withdrawal from active public life, Cobden was greatly harassed by private anxieties. As there was always much ill-natured gossip about his affairs, it is well to state the facts as they were. With a portion of the proceeds of the national testimonial, Cobden, as we have already seen, had purchased the little property which had belonged to

1858. Æt. 54. his forefathers. The rest, or most of the rest, he had invested in the shares of an American railway. The Illinois Central is the great line from North to South, with its headquarters at Chicago, taking its course right through the centre of the rich valley of the Mississippi, and joining the great river itself at Saint Louis, Cairo, and New Orleans. Very large tracts of the finest alluvial soil in Illinois were ceded to the company on each side of the line. The company, therefore, had two sources of profit, one arising from the sale of the lands, the other from the traffic on the line itself, which in grain was very large and daily increasing. Such property was clearly a legitimate investment to persons who, if more capital were called up than was at first anticipated, could afford to meet the calls upon their shares without inconvenience.[1] With a man in Cobden's position the case was different. In this matter, however, he was not disposed to listen to the advice of his friends, who recommended him only to hold bonds or paid-up shares. "I recollect," says Mr. W. S. Lindsay, "having many conversations with Cobden on this subject. I agreed with him entirely as to the prospects of the line, but we differed as to the time when the large prospective profits of the undertaking could be realized. He thought they were close at hand; I, on the contrary, held the opinion that, while all the land would in time find purchasers, they would rather belong to the next generation than to our own. In this instance my views came true. The land found purchasers, but not to the extent nor with the rapidity anticipated. The directors had calculated that the proceeds from the sale of the lands would enable them to complete the line, and consequently render further calls upon

[1] The 100 dollar ordinary shares were lately at 150, and are now 138.

1858.
ÆT. 54.

the shareholders unnecessary. In this they were mistaken."

"Cobden," Mr. Lindsay goes on to say, "viewed his investments in an entirely different light from that in which they would be seen by an ordinary man of business. He thought of the overcrowded cities of Europe, and of the masses of people who on this side of the Atlantic were seeking, or about to seek, new homes in the Far West. His mind surveyed at a glance the vast expanse of rich, unoccupied virgin land in the mighty valley of the Mississippi, through which the Illinois Central ran its course—a valley where millions of people from the Old World could find profitable employment. He was aware of the great and rapidly increasing facilities which would enable the intending emigrant to reach this most tempting field at less cost than their fathers could have travelled from Glasgow to London; and for these reasons he came to the conclusion that the demand for the company's land would be both great and immediate, and the money derived from the sale would be more than sufficient to complete all the works connected with the railway. But Cobden was no speculator in the ordinary sense of the word."

In a letter to Mr. Moffatt, with whom he was in constant correspondence on the subject at this time, Cobden shows how conscious he was of the view which a hard-headed man of business would be likely to take of what he was doing. At the beginning of 1858, Mr. Osborn, the chairman of the railway, was in England, and visited him at Dunford.

"Osborn was so candid with me," Cobden writes, "so disinterested and friendly in his advice, that I could not help suspecting that a very good friend

1858. Æt. 54. of mine had whispered in his ear something to this effect. 'Say nothing to feed his sanguine views. He has already become *tête montée* about the Illinois; but rather throw in a word of caution about putting too many eggs in one basket. He is a worn-out agitator, out of business, with a young family. Such people ought not to become speculators. As a rule your public men, and especially your revolutionary leaders, make unsuccessful men of business. They look too high and too far, and others who fire at a shorter range beat them in the field. Besides, they look at things too much in the gross, neglect details, and disregard the element of time, which in speculation is everything. Here is Cobden dealing with Illinois Central as if they were going to yield him a profit next quarter-day. Warn him that it will take many years to realize all his expectations.' Am I not right in my surmise?"

Whether the surmise was right or not, it is clear that the investment, however sound, was not a prudent one for a man who had no spare capital, and who needed income. Cobden was greatly inconvenienced by outstanding loans which were raised to pay the calls. In connexion with them, it is for the honour of human nature that we should mention an extraordinary example of grateful and considerate munificence. The late Mr. Thomasson of Bolton, hearing from Mr. Slagg, their common friend, that Cobden was embarrassed by one of these outstanding loans for the Illinois shares, amounting to several thousand pounds, released the shares and sent them to Cobden, with a request that he would do him the favour to accept their freedom at his hands "in acknowledgment of his vast services to his country and mankind." On a later occasion, when the same difficulty recurred for the same reasons, Mr.

1858.
ÆT. 54.

Thomasson went down to Midhurst, ascertained the circumstances, and insisted that Cobden should accept a still larger sum, refusing a formal acknowledgment, and handing it over in such a form that the transaction was not known to any one but Cobden and himself. After Mr. Thomasson's death, there was found among his private papers a little memorandum of his advances, containing these magnanimous words: "I lament that the greatest benefactor of mankind since the inventor of printing should be placed in a position where his public usefulness is compromised and impeded by sordid personal cares; but I have done something as my share of what is due to him from his countrymen to set him free for further efforts in the cause of human progress. My children will hereafter be proud that their father at all events recognized his claims. Their fortunes are to a great extent the result of Richard Cobden's sacrifices."

It was in connexion with the Illinois Railway that Cobden made his second voyage to the United States. He went on behalf of other English shareholders to examine the line and its management on the spot. He remained in the country for three months. Everything that he saw delighted him. The material and moral progress since his visit in 1835 realized all his expectations. "It is the universal hope of rising in the social scale," he told Mr. Bright, "which is the key to much of the superiority that is visible in this country. It accounts for the orderly self-respect which is the great characteristic of the masses in the United States. . . . All this tends to the argument that the political condition of a people is very much dependent on its economical fate."

1858. ÆT. 54.

So far as the immediate object of his journey went, Cobden declared himself to be more than satisfied. "As respects the main question," he wrote to his wife, "as to the ultimate success of the undertaking, I have no doubt whatever that it will prove the best railroad investment in America. But unfortunately it does not suit me to wait, and nearly all I have is at stake." In another letter to Mrs. Cobden he writes: "My thoughts are much with you and the dear children. I feel great anxiety to know that you are settled. Everything has gone as unluckily as possible with me. I sometimes feel almost unnerved, great as is my energy and natural buoyancy." As we shall see presently, the clouds vanished quickly from his spirit, as soon as ever he saw a piece of useful work to be done.

CHAPTER XXVIII

RETURN FROM AMERICA—THE NEW MINISTRY

1859.
ÆT. 55.

DURING Cobden's absence, great events came to pass in the Parliamentary world. Mr. Disraeli introduced his Reform Bill (Feb. 1859), which included the famous "fancy" franchises, and the use of voting papers. The Conservatives did not like the Bill, and two of their most respected leaders, Mr. Henley and Mr. Walpole, quitted the Ministry rather than be parties to it. The Whigs objected to it as an encroachment on their own political preserves. Mr. Bright denounced it as absurd and irritating, disturbing everything and settling nothing. The Government were defeated by a majority of thirty-nine in a House of six hundred and twenty-one members. They dissolved Parliament three weeks afterwards, and the writs for its successor were issued before the end of April.

The men of Rochdale met and resolved to choose Cobden as the Liberal candidate. Mr. Bright went to their meeting and commended to them his "political associate, his political brother," in a manly and cordial record of Cobden's past career. Cobden had told him that he would rather sit for Rochdale than for any other borough in England; for Rochdale Liberalism, he said, had heart enough in it "to back up a man

1859. ÆT. 55.

against the aristocratic section of the legislature." Cobden was eventually returned without a contest.

When the elections were over the Conservatives claimed to have gained twenty-nine seats, but this was not enough to secure them against a union of the various sections of the Opposition. The day before the assembling of the new Parliament (June 6), those sections held a conference at Willis's Rooms, settled their differences with one another, and devised a vote of want of confidence as an amendment on the Address. This vote was moved the next night by Lord Hartington, and was carried, after a debate which lasted three nights, by a majority of thirteen in a House of six hundred and forty-three (June 10). The Government immediately resigned.

Before the meeting at Willis's Rooms, the two chiefs whose rivalry had so long weakened party organization had come to an understanding that either would consent to serve under the other. The Queen was unwilling to settle the question between "two statesmen so full of years and honours," and sent for a younger and less experienced man. But Lord Granville, after making an attempt to form a Ministry, resigned a task in which it had never been possible for him to succeed. Lord Palmerston was designated for the first post by a voice which the sovereign of a free country cannot pretend to ignore. All difficulties disappeared before his incomparably strong political position, and within five days of the defeat of the fallen Government Lord Palmerston had completed his list, with the exception of one post. This post was reserved for Cobden, then known to be on his way home.

The following is the letter which was despatched

by the new Prime Minister to meet him on landing at Liverpool:— 1859. ÆT. 55.

"94 PICCADILLY, *27th June* 1859.

"MY DEAR SIR—I understand that it is likely that you may arrive at Liverpool to-morrow, and I therefore wish that this letter should be placed in your hands upon your landing.

"I have been commissioned by the Queen to form an Administration, and I have endeavoured so to frame it, that it should contain representatives of all sections of the Liberal party, convinced as I am that no Government constructed upon any other basis could have sufficient prospect of duration, or would be sufficiently satisfactory to the country.

"Mr. Milner Gibson has most handsomely consented to waive all former difficulties, and to become a member of the new Cabinet. I am most exceedingly anxious that you should consent to adopt the same line, and I have kept open for you the office of President of the Board of Trade, which appeared to me to be the one best suited to your views, and to the distinguished part which you have taken in public life. I shall be very glad to see you, and to have personal communication with you as soon as may be convenient to you on your arrival in London, and I am,

"My dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"PALMERSTON."

The invitation was supported by a letter which was sent at the same time by Lord Palmerston's most important colleague:—

"CHESHAM PLACE, *June 25th*, 1859.

"MY DEAR MR. COBDEN—Lord Palmerston will have written to you to offer you a seat in his Cabinet.

1859. Æt. 55.

"An attempt has been made, more or less wisely, to form a Government from various sections of Liberals. Recent speeches have prevented the offer of a Cabinet office to Mr. Bright. This is much to be regretted; but if you accept, his accession may take place hereafter. If you refuse, I do not see a prospect of amalgamating the Liberal party during my lifetime.

"In these circumstances I confess I think it is a DUTY for you to accept the office of President of the Board of Trade.

"I remain,

"Yours faithfully,

"J. RUSSELL."

Cobden arrived in the Mersey on June 29, and in a letter written the next day to Mrs. Cobden, described what happened:—

"*Manchester, June* 30, 1859.—I had but a moment yesterday in Liverpool to apprise you of my safe arrival in England. As I came up the Mersey, I little dreamed of the reception which awaited me. Crowds of friends were ready to greet and cheer me; and before I left the ship a packet of letters was put in my hand, containing one from Lord Palmerston, offering me a seat in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade, and another from Lord John Russell, urging me in the very strongest terms to accept it. There were letters from Moffatt, Gilpin, and a great many others, advising me not to refuse the offer.

"I was completely taken by surprise by all this, for I had heard nothing of the change of Government, and was twenty-five days without having seen the latest news from England, namely eleven days' passage, and fourteen days which we were behind the news when I left Quebec.

1859.
ÆT. 55.

"I went on shore and proceeded to the hotel, where my troubles began. More than a hundred of the leading men of Liverpool assembled in the large room to present me with an address, which was put into my hand by Mr. William Brown. . . . Afterwards Mr. Robertson Gladstone, from the Financial Reform Association, Mr. Rathbone, from the American Chamber of Commerce, and the President of the Peace Society all presented addresses, to which I was obliged, without a moment's notice, and with my head still swimming with the motion of the sea, to deliver replies. It was really like killing one with kindness. I have come on here [to Manchester] to see my friends, and hear what they have to say. A deputation from Rochdale is over also. And I have an address from a number of persons, including Bazley and H. Ashworth, wishing me to accept the offer of a seat in the Cabinet. Indeed, almost without exception, everybody, Radicals, Peace men, and all, are trying to persuade me to it.

"Now it really seems to me that they must all have gone mad, for with my recorded opinions of Lord Palmerston's public conduct during the last dozen years, *in which opinions I have experienced no change*, were I suddenly to jump at the offer of a place under him, I should ruin myself in my own self-respect, and ultimately lose the confidence of the very men who are in this moment of excitement urging me to enter his Cabinet. So great is the pressure put on me, that if it were Lord Granville, or even Lord John, at the head of affairs, I should be obliged, greatly against my will, to be a Right Honourable. But to take office now, without a single declaration of change of view regarding his public conduct, would be so monstrous a course, that nothing on earth shall induce me to do it. I

1859. ÆT. 55

am going to town this afternoon, and shall forward him my answer on my arrival. I listen to all my friends and say nothing, but my mind is made up."

On arriving a day or two later in London, Cobden lost no time in calling upon Lord Palmerston. He wrote a full account of all that passed between them to Mr. Sale, his brother-in-law in Manchester.

"*London, 4th July* 1859.—I thought it best on my arrival in town to go *first* to Palmerston, and explain plainly and frankly everything. On calling on him I was most pleasantly welcomed, and we talked as usual for a few minutes on everything but what I went about. At length I broke the ice in this way. 'You have acted in so manly and magnanimous a manner in pressing me to take office in your Cabinet, that I feel bound to come and talk to you without reserve upon the subject. My case is this. For the last twelve years I have been the systematic and constant assailant of the principle on which your foreign policy has been carried on. I believed you to be warlike, intermeddling and quarrelsome, and that your policy was calculated to embroil us with foreign nations. At the same time I have expressed a general want of confidence in your domestic politics. Now I may have been altogether wrong in my views; it is possible I may have been, but I put it candidly to you whether it ought to be in your Cabinet, whilst holding a post of high honour and emolument derived from you, that I should make the first avowal of a change of opinion respecting your public policy? Should I not expose myself to severe suspicions, and deservedly so, if I were under these circumstances to step from an Atlantic steamer into your Cabinet? Understand, I beg, that I have no personal feelings which prevent me from accepting your offer. I have opposed you as

the supposed representative of what I believed to be dangerous principles. If I have ever been personally offensive in my opposition it was not intended, and assuredly you never gave me any justification for such a course.' 1859. ÆT. 55

"In reply he disclaimed any feelings of a personal kind, and said that even if there had been any personalities, they never ought to be remembered for three months; and he added in a laughing way that he thought Gibson had hit him quite as hard as I had. Then he commenced to combat my objections, and to offer, with apparently great sincerity, a variety of arguments to show that I ought to enter the Cabinet, dwelling particularly on the fact that as questions of foreign policy were now uppermost, and as those questions were in the hands of the Executive, it was only by joining the Government that I could influence them. 'You and your friends complain,' he said, 'of a secret diplomacy, and that wars are entered into without consulting the people. Now it is in the Cabinet alone that questions of foreign policy are settled. We never consult Parliament till *after* they are settled. If, therefore, you wish to have a voice in those questions, you can only do so in the Cabinet.' This was the argument I found it most difficult to answer, and therefore he pressed it most strongly.

"But finding me still firm in my objections, he observed laughingly, 'Why are you in the House of Commons?' I answered also with a laugh, 'Upon my word I hardly know.' 'But why did you enter public life?' said he. 'I hardly know,' was my answer; 'it was by mere accident, and for a special purpose, and probably it would have been better for me and my family if I had kept my private station.' Upon which he threw out both his hands, and, with

1859. Æt. 55. a laugh louder than before, he exclaimed, 'Well, but being in it, why not go on?' He added, 'Recollect I don't offer you the seat from any desire of my own to change my colleagues. If left to me, I would of course rather have gone on as before with my old friends. I offer you the seat because you have a right to it.'

"In answer to my remark that perhaps others might be found quite as much entitled as myself to represent the advanced Liberals in his Government, he replied quickly, 'Will you be good enough to mention the name of any one, excepting Bright, Gibson, and yourself, that I could bring into the Cabinet as the representative of the Radicals?' I urged that Bright had been unfairly judged, and that his speeches at Birmingham, etc., were not of a kind to exclude him from an offer of a seat, and I remarked that he had very carefully avoided personalities in those speeches. 'It is not personalities that are complained of; a public man,' said he, 'is right in attacking persons. But it is his attacks on *classes* that have given offence to powerful bodies, who can make their resentment felt.'

"In the course of his remarks he gave me a full explanation of his views on the present war, and expressed his determination to preserve a strict neutrality, observing that, as the people of England would as soon think of 'evacuating these islands' as to go to war in behalf of Austria, and as France did not ask us to help her, he could not see any possibility of our being mixed up in the fray. On this point he remarked:—'If you are afraid of our abandoning our neutral ground, why don't you come into the citadel of power, where you could have a voice in preventing it?'

"On his remarking upon the difficulty there would

1859.
ÆT. 55.

be in carrying on the Government unless all parties were united, and how impossible it was for him to do so if the natural representatives of the Liberals would not take office, I replied that the very fact of his having offered me office was, so far as I was concerned, his justification; and that *I* should be blamed, and not he in the matter. And I added, 'I shall give just the same support to your Government whilst Mr. Gibson is in it, who represents identically my views, as I should if I were one of your Government: for I should be certain to run away, if you were to do anything very contrary to my strong convictions.' I added that at present there were only two subjects on which we could have any serious difference, and that if he kept out of the war, and gave us a fair Reform measure, I did not see any other point on which I should be found opposing him. He returned to the argument that my presence in the Government was the important step required; and I then told him that having run the gauntlet of my friends in Lancashire, who had kindly pressed the matter on me, and having resolved to act in opposition to their views, which nothing but the strongest convictions of the propriety of my course could have induced me to do, my mind was irrevocably made up. And so I rose to depart, expressing the hope that our personal and political relations might be in future the same as if I were in his Government.

"As I left the room he said, 'Lady Palmerston receives to-morrow evening at ten.' To which I instantly replied, 'I shall be happy to be allowed to present myself to her.' 'I shall be very glad if you will,' was his answer, and so we parted.

"The next evening I was at Cambridge House for the first time, and found myself among a crowd

1859. ÆT. 55.

of fashionables and politicians, and was the lion of the party. The women came and stared with their glasses at me, and then brought their friends to stare also. As I came away, Jacob Omnium and I were squeezed into a corner together, and he remarked, 'You are the greatest political monster that ever was seen in this house. There never was before seen such a curiosity as a man who refused a Cabinet office from Lord Palmerston, and then came to visit him here. Why, there are not half a dozen men in all that crowd that would not jump at the offer, and believe themselves quite as fit as you to be President of the Board of Trade.'

"I never had before so much annoyance to my feelings as in this matter. To be pressed by nearly all my friends to take a course which I felt from the first moment to be impossible, was a most painful ordeal to go through. I don't remember any political occurrence which ever before made me ill. This has really upset my physical health. However, I hope my friends will on reflection do me justice, and believe that I acted conscientiously. Certainly all the ordinary motives of human nature would have led me to come to quite another conclusion."

This conclusion caused deep chagrin to many, perhaps to most, of those with whom he had been most closely associated. His friends in the north were excited and elated by the circumstance that one of their own number, a middle-class manufacturer, had at length penetrated the sacred enclosure of the oligarchy. In France all the best men were infinitely delighted by the honour that had been paid to one to whom they were accustomed to look up as the champion of progress and political morality. They dreamed that his presence in the Cabinet would be a guarantee for conciliatory ideas

in the Government. They were greatly disappointed at the issue. M. Chevalier accepted Cobden's reasons; but he protested against any absolute and systematic resolution on Cobden's part never to take office. "When a man has mixed himself up in public affairs," he said, "with so much superiority and success as you have had, then the public has a certain claim upon him, and the exercise of this claim is the demand that he shall take part in the government of the country." 1859. ÆT. 55.

There was one eminent man, however, who earnestly approved of the step that had been taken. Mr. Bright declared that he had never been more clear of anything than that Cobden looked at the matter in a true light; and he thought that a few months would prove this to be so. We now know that Mr. Bright's sagacity was not at fault. Almost from the first the new Cabinet espoused the policy of suspicion and alarm, and within the few months of which Mr. Bright had spoken, we shall find Cobden writing to Lord Palmerston and Lord John, with a vehemence of protest and conviction which he could under no circumstances have controlled, and which would have made his position in the Government desperate. It is true that to one powerful member of that Cabinet its military policy, now and after, was as abhorrent as it was to Cobden himself; who wrestled with his conscience by day and by night as to the morality of his position; and who only escaped from his own reprobation by the hope that in a balance of evils he had chosen the course which led to the less of them. If Cobden had been sitting by Mr. Gladstone's side at the Council table during the first half of 1860, would they together have been able to resist Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, supported by the body of

1859. Æt. 55.

the Cabinet, and encouraged by the excited suspicions of the great bulk of the nation? To put the question is to answer it. Lord Palmerston was quite strong enough at that moment to do without Cobden, and even without Mr. Gladstone, if Mr. Gladstone, yielding to a moral pressure which, as we shall see, Cobden unsparingly applied to him when the time came, had refused to remain an accessory, and had left the Government. If Cobden had taken office at midsummer, he would certainly have been out of it by Christmas.

Beneath solid considerations of this kind, there was probably an unspoken sense of a loss of personal dignity and self-respect that would follow official subordination to a Minister of whom he had thought and spoken so ill as he had thought and spoken of Lord Palmerston. When Macaulay supposed in the crisis of 1845 that there was a chance of his being invited to take office under Sir Robert Peel, he said: "After the language which I have held respecting Peel, and which I am less than ever disposed to retract, I feel that I cannot without a loss of personal dignity, and without exposing myself to suspicions and insinuations that would be insupportable to me, hold any situation under him."[1] There is always sure to be too little rather than too much of this honourable sensibility in public life. Cobden was perfectly justified in disclaiming all personal feeling about Lord Palmerston, but his repugnance to the sentiments, traditions, and methods of which Palmerston was the representative, was the deepest part of his nature, and it was ineradicable. The instinct was surely sound which told him that something would be lost to the integrity of his political character and conscience, if he allowed the seeming expediency

[1] Trevelyan's *Life*, ii. 163.

1859.
ÆT. 55.

of the hour to tempt him into an alliance with a system that he had always denounced, and with men who had all their lives been committed to it heart and soul. Other people would in the long run have felt the same thing about him. The moral influence of character is the most delicate of all forces. It is affected by subtle and almost imperceptible agencies, of which logic is far too rough an instrument to take any account. The idea which men had, and still have, of Cobden's simplicity, independence, and conviction, would inevitably have been tarnished if he had accepted a post under one, to whom the beliefs and the language of a lifetime made him the typical antagonist.

This was what was in Cobden's mind when he said, "I have a horror of losing my individuality, which is to me as existence itself." His position in the League had shown that nobody was less open than he to the charge of inability to act with others —that fatal sign of mediocre capacity. But a more fatal sign of a worse moral mediocrity is the ability to act with the first comer. Cobden was of all men the most staunch and most flexible member of an alliance, but he was scrupulously careful in choosing who his allies should be. He was right in thinking that he should not find one after his own heart either in Lord Palmerston, or among many of the colleagues with whom Palmerston was likely to provide him.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FRENCH TREATY

1859. Æt. 55.

In the summer of 1859, M. Michel Chevalier paid a visit to England, which led to one of the most important chapters in the life of Cobden, as well as to a very important episode in the relations between England and France. To M. Chevalier, Free Trade was an article of religious conviction. In his early manhood he had been one of that truly remarkable band of men who between 1830 and 1840 devoted themselves to the principles of Saint Simon, to propagating them in every country from the Seine to the Nile, and to carrying them out in their own lives and persons with the fervid enthusiasm of the first followers of Saint Francis. It was they who first succeeded in setting industrial questions before political ones in French opinion; and though their organization split upon the rock of certain theocratic fantasies, the wide social views connected with it remained deeply stamped on their minds. They made a definite impression in France, and prepared the way for the events of 1848. So early as 1832 M. Chevalier had shown the bias of his views by a paper on the Mediterranean system, proposing the construction of railways throughout Europe on a scale which then seemed chimerical enough. In this he dwelt upon the facilities that would be offered for

1859.
ÆT. 55.

travelling from one country to another, and how these facilities "would speedily break down the barriers of ancient prejudice, remove hereditary animosities, and firmly cement nation to nation in a lasting peace."[1] The Suez Canal was another favourite idea with these far-seeing men; for one of the most striking things about them was that they united to their mystic enthusiasm, as their lives afterwards proved, practical faculties of the highest and most valuable kind. Free exchange exactly fitted in with their notions of promoting international union by increasing the pacific intercourse of nations.

In the session of 1859, Mr. Bright in a speech in the House of Commons incidentally asked why, instead of lavishing the national substance in armaments, they did not go to the French Emperor and attempt to persuade him to allow his people to trade freely with ours.[2] M. Chevalier, after reading this speech, was inspired by the idea of a Commercial Treaty between England and France, and he wrote to Cobden in this sense. Coming to England shortly afterwards, he found that Cobden had arranged, for family reasons, to pass a portion of the winter in Paris. He immediately saw an opening, and urged Cobden to seize the opportunity for converting the Emperor, as fifteen years earlier he had so powerfully aided in converting the English public, to the policy of Free Trade, and to as near an execution of that

[1] See Mr. A. J. Booth's *Saint Simon and Saint Simonism* (Longman, 1876), p. 169—an excellent account of an extraordinary movement.

[2] The idea was in the air. In a conversation with Lord John Russell, Count Persigny expressed a wish, as an earnest of the sincerity of the Emperor's desire for peace, for a Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and France, by which France might be enabled to lower her protective duties.—Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, iv. 470.

1859. Æt. 55.

policy as the circumstances of a country still in the stage of prohibition could permit.

These ideas made so strong an impression on Cobden that he grew eager to discuss them with the only statesman in the high official world with whom he felt conscious of deep moral and political sympathy. What made the idea of a Treaty possible, moreover, was that in the following year terminable annuities to the amount of upwards of two millions would fall in, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have that amount of taxation to deal with. If the Minister could be induced to entertain the idea of a Treaty, he would by means of such a surplus be able to make that reduction in the duties on French articles which the French would regard, and insist upon, as a price for a transformation of their own prohibitive system. In the early part of September, Cobden paid a visit to Hawarden, and there he opened his mind to Mr. Gladstone. They were both of them thoroughly alive to the objections to which on strictly economic grounds treaties of commerce must always be open. They both felt it to be perfectly true, if economic rules were never under any circumstances to be contravened, that, as Mr. Bright had already said, it was our business to look to our own tariffs, and to release French products from the duties that prevented our trading with France; and this without any stipulation as to what France should do in return. But then they felt that the occasion was one which could not be judged in this simple way. An economic principle by itself, as all sensible men have now learnt, can never be decisive of anything in the mixed and complex sphere of practice. Neither Cobden nor Mr. Gladstone could resist the force of M. Chevalier's emphatic assurance, that in no other way could the French tariff be altered in the direction of Free Trade

than through a diplomatic act, that is to say, a Commercial Treaty with England. The Emperor, moreover, in spite of his absolutist system, was practically powerless to reduce his duties, unless the English Government gave him the help of a corresponding movement on their side. 1859. ÆT. 55.

Mr. Gladstone discerned both the opportunity which such a movement would afford for continuing the great work of tariff reform, and the strong influence that a Commercial Treaty would have upon the violent and dangerous perturbations in the political sentiment of the two nations towards one another. His powerful imagination was kindled, and he had the first dawn of that fine vision which he revealed to the public in the famous Budget speech of the following February. He was, in fact, continuing the work which Sir Robert Peel had begun in 1842, along the very lines which Peel had then expressly laid down. In the case of wine and brandy, Sir Robert Peel had said that he did not reduce the duty, because he hoped that they might employ these duties "as instruments of negotiation, with a view of effecting a reduction in the duties imposed by other countries on the produce of our own country." "I am not disposed," Peel said, "to carry too far that principle of withholding from ourselves the benefits of reduction of duties in order to force other nations to act in a reciprocal manner, and in many cases we weakened the effect of instruments we held in our own hands by reducing the duty of articles relative to which negotiations might have been entered into. Our general rule was that in cases where the articles were elements of manufacture, or where there was risk from smuggling, we took to ourselves the advantage likely to arise from a reduction of duty on these articles; but in others,

1859. wine for example, we made no reduction of duty, and intend to make no reduction of duty, in the hope that we shall induce other countries to give to us an equivalent advantage." [1] The discussion therefore between Mr. Gladstone and Cobden at Hawarden in 1859 turned upon the means of realizing the hope then expressed by Sir Robert Peel in 1843, and expressed by him not casually, but as an element in a deliberate policy.

ÆT. 55.

Cobden's first suggestion had been that as he was about to spend a part of the winter in Paris, he might perhaps be of use to Mr. Gladstone in the way of inquiry. Conversation expanded this modest proposal into something more definite and more energetic. It was thought that, if he had the tacit and informal authority of the British Government, he might put himself into communication with the Emperor and his Ministers, might bring to bear upon them his well-tried powers of persuasion and conversion, and might work out with them the scheme of a Treaty which would give an occasion for a great fiscal reform in both countries, and in both countries would produce a solid and sterling pacification of feelings.

This was the plan with which Cobden quitted Hawarden. He was not confident of success, for he knew that he would have to deal with Governments, and he had little faith in either the courage or the disinterestedness of Governments. When he started on the expedition, he had written in no sanguine vein to Mr. Bright:—"Governments seem as a rule to be standing conspiracies to rob and bamboozle people, and why should that of Louis Napoleon be an exception? The more I see of the rulers of the world," he added, in amplification of a

[1] Feb. 17, 1843.

famous saying, "the less of wisdom or greatness do I find necessary for the government of mankind." 1859. ÆT. 55.

When he reached London he found that the Ministers had been summoned for a Cabinet Council. He called upon Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, and discussed M. Chevalier's notions with them. "It is not easy," he wrote to Mr. Bright, "to interest men whose foreign policy has been running in such different grooves, in questions of political economy and tariffs. But I spoke frankly to both of them as to the state of our relations with France, and disparaged the value of an alliance in China, or any other pretended *entente cordiale*, whilst we were keeping up twenty-six millions of armaments, principally as a defence against France."

"From what I hear," he continued, "the Cabinet is concerned with the mighty question whether France is to take a bit of territory from Morocco. We are, I suppose, to protest from Gibraltar against anything so shocking to us as picking and stealing our neighbour's territory going on within view of that reputable possession of ours. We have taken a whole empire from a Mahometan sovereign in Asia, and we are horrified at France taking a province in the same latitude from a Mahometan sovereign in Africa. For my part, if France took the whole of Africa, I do not see what harm she would do us or anybody else save herself."[1]

It will one day seem incredible that two keen and

[1] The source of the uneasiness in Downing Street was the dispute between Spain and Morocco, as to the boundaries of the Spanish territory round Ceuta. "It is plain," Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord John Russell, "that France aims through Spain at getting fortified points on each side of the Gut of Gibraltar"—with the ultimate view of "shutting us out of the Mediterranean" (Ashley's *Life*, ii. 374). The inference as to the designs of France is a masterpiece of the perverse ingenuity of the Palmerstonian policy of alarm.

1859. patriotic statesmen of the eminence which Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell held in the public esteem, should at this stage of our history have so misconceived the relative importance of things, as to think the very remotest doings of any foreign Government a matter of real and primary importance, and an extension of our trade, however vast it might promise to be, a matter so purely secondary as hardly to be worth an hour's serious attention. At a Lord Mayor's dinner, or at a meeting at Manchester, each of them often uttered the stereotyped sentences about commercial prosperity being the basis of British greatness. But neither of them had what religious writers call a living sense of the extent to which such words were true. They were really thinking all the time of strong despatches and spirited representations. The commercial and industrial movements of our own country, and the relations of Government to them, were treated as objects for men of the third or fourth order in the political system. What is curious is, that while devoting such passionate attention to foreign affairs, no men ever seem to take so little pains as Ministers of this stamp to keep themselves abundantly and accurately informed of what really goes on in foreign countries, what forces are at work under the trite words of diplomatic agents, what amount of substance throws those shadows about which they write and speak so many busy sentences.

ÆT. 55.

Although, however, he received no cheerful encouragement from either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary, Cobden was not forbidden to proceed on the mission that he had volunteered. On October 18 he arrived in Paris, and on the 23rd he went to see Lord Cowley at Chantilly. They had a long conversation, in the course of which

the English Ambassador gave the Emperor a high character for straightforwardness, and a strict adherence to his word in all his engagements with Lord Cowley himself. Two days later Cobden, M. Chevalier, and M. Rouher dined together. The Minister had been very uneasy lest the fact of his interview with Cobden should get abroad, and I have heard that the dinner was planned with as much secrecy and discretion as if they had been three housebreakers under the surveillance of the police. 1859. ÆT. 55.

M. Rouher, who was then Minister of Commerce, professed strong Free Trade views, and was thoroughly won round by Cobden's exposition of the well-known list of Protectionist subterfuges. He made no secret that it was the Emperor only who on every question gave the initiative to his Minister. If he could be induced to reform his Customs duties, M. Rouher would be a very willing instrument in promoting his plans. The next step, and the greatest, was to convince the Emperor. The Minister undertook to procure an invitation, and two days later (October 27) Cobden went to Saint-Cloud to have his first audience. It was not the first time that they had seen one another. Cobden had met Louis Napoleon at breakfast at Mr. Monckton Milnes's three days after the escape from Ham in 1846. He had then set the Prince down for a very mediocre person indeed. He did his best to remember that he was now talking to quite a different personage, but was not sure that he always succeeded. Cobden kept a full journal of the events of the negotiation, and the following is his account of the first interview with the convert who was of paramount importance:—

"After a few remarks upon the subject of the improvements in Paris, and in the Bois de Boulogne,

1859. Æt. 55.

and after he had expressed his regret at my not having entered the Ministry of Lord Palmerston, the Emperor alluded to the state of feeling in England, and expressed his regret that notwithstanding he had for ten years given every possible proof of his desire to preserve the friendship of the British people, the Press had at last defeated his purpose, and now the relations of the two countries seemed to be worse than ever. He appealed to me if he had ever done one act to justify the manner in which he was assailed by our Press? I candidly told him that I thought the Governments of both countries were to blame. He asked what he could do more than he had already done to promote the friendly relations of the two countries.[1] This led

[1] In the letter which he wrote on the occasion to Lord Palmerston (Oct. 29, 1859) Cobden gave a rather fuller account of this preliminary part of the conversation:—"The Emperor began the conversation after a few introductory remarks, by complaining of the English Press. I told him that I had myself been accused of every crime almost by the Press (including an attempt at murder), and that I had learnt to laugh at it. He continued this topic by asking me to point out a single act during the ten years he had been in power, which had not been dictated by a desire to stand well with England, and to keep the two countries in a state of harmony and friendship; but the Press had completely defeated his object. After reminding him that I had blamed, both in Parliament and in public meetings, the attacks made in England on the Government of France, I said that he should bear in mind that his name, which had such a charm in the cottages of France, had still a sound which carried a traditional alarm into our houses, and that this feeling was worked upon by those who for their own ends persuaded the people that he intended to repeat the career of his uncle. With some excuses, I ventured to add that the way in which he had entered on the war in Italy, without a previous *exposé des motifs*, had given great force to their persuasion. He interrupted me by saying that he had explained his reasons. I told him that what I meant was that he had not appealed to the world with a manifesto of his grievances and objects, and that if he had done so, from what I knew of the opinion in England and America, where the Austrian Government had hardly a friend, the feeling would have been so universally in his favour that a war would not

1859.
ÆT. 55.

to the question of Free Trade, and I urged many arguments in favour of removing those obstacles which prevented the two countries from being brought into closer dependence on one another. He expressed himself as friendly to this policy, but alluded to the great difficulties in his way; said he had made an effort by admitting iron in bond for shipbuilding, which he was obliged to alter again, and spoke of the sliding scale on corn which had been reimposed after it had expired. I spoke of the opportuneness of the present moment for making a simultaneous change in the English and French tariffs, as there was a prospect of a surplus of revenue next year, owing to the expiry of our terminable annuities, and that Mr. Gladstone was very desirous to make this surplus available for reducing duties on French commodities. Louis Napoleon said he had a majority of his Chambers quite opposed to Free Trade, and that they would not pass a decided measure; that by the constitution he could alter the tariff by a decree, if it were part of a treaty with a foreign power; and he asked me whether England would enter into a commercial treaty with him. I explained that we could give no exclusive privileges to any nation; that we could simultaneously make reductions in our tariffs; and the alterations might be inserted in a treaty,

have been necessary. But the suddenness and secrecy with which this great war was entered upon alarmed people lest the same thing should be repeated. After some further conversation about the state of feeling, which I admitted was very bad, if not perilous, in England, and which he said was brought to such a state in France that he seemed to be almost the only man friendly to England left, I expressed an opinion, very frankly, that the Governments of both countries, professing as they did to be friendly, would be responsible, if not blameable, were nothing done to try to put an end to this state of things."

1859. ÆT. 55.

but that our tariff must be equally applicable to all countries. He said he was under a pledge not to abolish the prohibitive system in France and substitute moderate duties, previous to 1861. I told him that I saw no obstacle in this to a treaty being entered into next spring, for that the moral effect would be the same even if the full operation of the new duties did not come into play for two or three years. He asked me to let him know what reductions could be made in our tariff upon articles affecting his country, which I promised to do. He then inquired what I should advise him to do in regard to the French tariff. I said I should attack one article of great and universal necessity, as I had done in England, when I confined all my efforts to the abolition of the Corn Laws, knowing that when that *clef de voûte* was removed, the whole system would fall. In France, the great primary want was cheap iron, which is the daily bread of all industries, and I should begin by abolishing the duty on iron and coal, and then I should be in a better position for approaching all the other industries; that I would, if necessary, pay an indemnity in some shape to the iron-masters, and thus be enabled to abolish their protection immediately—a course which I should not contemplate following with any other commodity but iron and coal. He spoke of the danger of throwing men out of work, and I tried by a variety of arguments to convince him, especially by a reference to the example of England, that the effect of a reduction of duties is to increase, not diminish, the demand for labour. I showed that in England we had much machinery standing idle in consequence of the want of workmen at the present

time; and in order to allay his fears of an inundation of British products, to throw his own people out of work, I explained that there was not an ounce of our productions which was not already bespoken, and that it would take a long time to increase largely our investment of capital, whilst it was impossible to procure any considerable addition to our labourers. On my giving him a description of the reforms effected by Sir Robert Peel, and the great reverence in which his name is held, he said, 'I am charmed and flattered at the idea of performing a similar work in my country; but,' he added, 'it is very difficult in France to make reforms; we make revolutions in France, not reforms.' 1859. ÆT. 55.

"The Emperor is short in stature and very undignified; I never saw a person with fewer heroic traits in his appearance and manner. But there is nothing harsh or even cold in the expression of his countenance. His eye is not pleasant at first, but it warms and moistens with conversation, and gives you the impression that he is capable of generous emotions.

"The approach to the Palace of Saint-Cloud was thronged with military, both horse and foot. I entered the building, and passed through an avenue of liveried lacqueys in the hall, from which I ascended the grand staircase, guarded at the top by sentries, and I passed through a series of apartments hung with gorgeous tapestry, each room being in charge of servants higher in rank as they come nearer to the person of the Sovereign. As I surveyed this gorgeous spectacle, I found my thoughts busy with the recollection of a very different scene which I had looked upon a few months before at Washington, when I was the guest of the President of the United States, a

1859. Æt. 55.

plain man in a black suit, living in comparative simplicity, without a sentry at his door or a livery servant in his house."

In writing of this important interview to Mr. Bright, Cobden says (Nov. 17, 1859):—

"I had a full hour's private talk at Saint-Cloud with Louis Napoleon. He knew I had taken the unpopular line in opposing the invasion cry. He is not unmindful of such acts of fairness, and I felt myself not only tolerated but encouraged to talk, with just as much frankness as I could to you or any other equal. In reply to his strong complaints against the English Press, I told him that the course he had taken in beginning the Italian war suddenly, and without publishing a manifesto of his grievances to the world, had alarmed the public mind of Europe; that not only England but Germany was arming to the teeth; and that this was all in reference to himself, and from the fear that he contemplated repeating the career of his uncle. I told him that there was but one way of removing this impression, and that was by a bold measure of commercial reform; that there was only a choice between the policy of Napoleon I. and the policy of Sir Robert Peel. On this point, I used every argument, to make it appear that it was his interest to begin the work at once; quoted the complete success of our experiment; and pointed to the fame of Sir Robert Peel, and the veneration in which his memory was held, as stimulants for his honourable ambition. I found his sympathies strongly with us, but he is ignorant of practical details, and he has consequently a great dread of the Protectionists. You may be sure I spared no pains to take the latter gentry down in his estimation. I never had a better private pupil. He is a good listener, and put some very pertinent questions.

1859.
ÆT. 55.

The most remarkable fact respecting this man is, that, whilst the Press and the popular sentiment attribute to him the most tortuous and deceptive policy, *all* who have business with him, without exception, give him the character of straightforwardness and fairness. This is the testimony of Malmesbury, Lord John, and Lord Palmerston, and of Lord Cowley to a very high degree indeed. Then, turning to Kossuth, who had the cup dashed suddenly from his lips, by the almost unaccountable turn in the affairs of the war at Villafranca, *he* distinctly told me that Louis Napoleon did not in the slightest degree deceive or betray *him*. I travelled from Paris to London last week with Klapka, who was at the headquarters of the war, and he repeated the sentiments expressed by Kossuth. Klapka thinks Louis Napoleon has genuine popular sympathies, and wound up his remarks on him with the words, 'Il n'est pas méchant.'"

The Emperor afterwards expressed himself to M. Fould as highly satisfied with the interview. Cobden, he said, had given him a little courage. In describing this interview to Lord Palmerston, Cobden expressed a strong opinion that the Emperor was more afraid than he need have been, of the protected interests. "I have no doubt that as you say," Lord Palmerston wrote in reply, "the Emperor and his advisers greatly exaggerate the resisting power of the Protectionist classes. But the want of moral courage in Frenchmen which you advert to, is confessed even by Frenchmen themselves, and it is probably one cause of the frequency of political convulsions in France." Napoleon was open to the impressions of political fervour. Cobden produced upon his mind the same reinspiriting effect which had followed in relation to his Italian policy from the memorable interview with Cavour in the previous spring.

1859. Æt. 55.

M. Fould was the person next to be converted, and Cobden succeeded in persuading him that instead of the timid course of replacing a policy of prohibition by a policy of extensive protection, the Government would do better boldly to embrace a large reform. The Protectionists, he very truly said, would offer as much opposition to a timid as to a bold scheme, while for a small reform there would be no vigorous popular sympathy or support. They went over again the whole question of Free Trade, M. Fould using many of the old fallacies about being inundated by British goods, labourers being thrown out of work, and so forth. "I had," says Cobden, "to give him the first lessons in political economy."

A day or two afterwards he received from the Emperor an invitation for himself and his wife to spend four days at Compiègne. He declined it on the plea of Mrs. Cobden's health. M. Chevalier was very anxious that he should go, and Cobden wrote to Mr. Bright that he was sorely tempted to accept the invitation, because it would have given him a good opportunity of talking to the Emperor unreservedly, and without the risk of his audiences being reported. It was the Emperor's custom to walk about with his guests, and chat with them over his interminable cigarettes. "If I had been sure," Cobden says, "of converting my pupil into a practical Free Trader, I would have gone. But if I failed, the fact of my having taken part in those gay festivities would have furnished a ready taunt of my having been bought and seduced, if I had ever said a word against a French invasion afterwards. So it is better as it is."[1]

Ten days were passed in discussions with M. Fould and conversations with M. Chevalier. There were

[1] *To J. Bright*, Nov. 20, 1859.

1859. ÆT. 55.

many vacillations, and each day brought its new rumour, for hope or discouragement. Cobden's record of some of his interviews with the Minister is worth reproducing, because they show the mind of the French Government in listening to his arguments, and they show also how entirely the French Ministers depended on him for inspiration and guidance in their new policy.

"*Nov.* 2.—M. Fould called; he seemed preoccupied with the uneasy and hostile state of feeling in England against France. He regretted that there was no way in which a statesman in France could make a public statement in reply to the speeches delivered at the late Conservative banquet at Liverpool; said something must be done to allay the uneasiness in the financial and commercial world; and at all events, was glad that the French and English Governments had come to an understanding respecting the joint expedition against China.[1] The officers sent to England to arrange this combination of forces had, he said, completed their plans satisfactorily in conjunction with the British authorities. This warlike alliance has been strenuously sought for lately by the French Government under the impression, as I believe, that it would tend to promote a more amicable state of feeling between the two countries. I told him I had great doubts whether this expectation would be realized; that the war against China would not be popular in England; and the motives of each

[1] By the Treaty of 1858 the European signatories had the right of sending ambassadors to Pekin. In June 1859, the English fleet conveying the envoy was resisted at the mouth of the Pei-Ho. Without giving the Chinese an opportunity of making reparation, the English and French Governments proceeded to organize a joint expedition. It was in the course of this (Oct. 6, 1860) that the European troops committed the infamy of pillaging and burning the Summer Palace.

1859. party in going into the alliance would be certain to be misinterpreted by the other. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I suppose it will be said to be a snare on our part.' He then repeated the words, 'Something must be done,' and he recurred at last, apparently with no great relish, to the subject of a Commercial Treaty with England.

Æt. 55.

"He saw great difficulties in the way. How, when, and where could a negotiation be carried on, and with whom? He was afraid that if a meeting between himself, the Minister of Commerce, M. Rouher, and myself, were to take place, it could not be kept a secret; that at present they had concealed even from M. Walewski, the Foreign Minister, the fact of any conversation having taken place between the Emperor, and themselves, and me. I spoke of Prince Napoleon, whom M. Fould described as quite a sincere opponent of Protection, but he added that he was very apt to talk too freely, and that we must be careful how we took him into our counsels. I told him that, as regarded the negotiations, I was prepared to go into the preliminary discussion of the changes which should be made in the tariffs of the two countries; that I could in a short interview or two with him and M. Rouher, give them a general idea as to what I thought ought to be done by both parties, and that if necessary I thought I could obtain Lord Palmerston's authority for acting in the matter. He had no objection to make to this. He said he was to dine with the Emperor to-morrow; and all I could gather was that he seemed to be in a very timid and undecided state of mind.

"Before parting, I alluded to the state of uneasiness, not only in England but on the Continent, and reminded him of the great increase of warlike preparation which had been going on; and I ex-

pressed an opinion that a Bonaparte being on the throne of France, who had last spring invaded Italy and fought great battles, was the cause of the present feeling of mistrust, and that to this fact alone was to be attributed an augmentation of the expenditure for defensive armaments in Europe at this moment to the amount of twenty millions sterling per annum. He said that nothing was farther from the Emperor's thoughts than to pursue a warlike policy. I remarked, as he was leaving the room, that, so far as I was acquainted with the state of public opinion in England, nothing would so instantaneously convince the people there of the Emperor's pacific intentions, as his entering boldly upon a policy of commercial reform, by which he would enable those who, like myself, took the unpopular side in opposing the current of prejudice and hatred which was running against him in England, to turn the tables on his accusers and detractors. Afterwards I called on Lord Cowley, and explained what had passed. He was going to dine to-day with M. Fould. The droll part of these interviews, besides the timidity of the people, is that here is a Government having so little faith or confidence in one another, that some of its members tie me down, a perfect stranger, to secrecy as against their most elevated colleagues!" 1859. ÆT. 55.

The next day Cobden started for London, where he remained for a week, partly engaged in some private business connected with the Illinois Railway. He saw Mr. Gladstone, who entered as heartily as before into the matter. "Gladstone," he said in a letter to his trusted friend at Rochdale, "is really almost the only Cabinet Minister of five years' standing who is not afraid to let his heart guide his head a little at times." He tried to see the Foreign Secretary, but failed. "I doubt," he says, "whether

1859 Æt. 55.

Lord John is not just now attaching more value to the spirited turn of a phrase about Morocco, than to my efforts to lay down a commercial cable that shall bind these two great countries together." He called on Lord Palmerston, and had a conversation on the state of public feeling in France and England. Lord Palmerston admitted that the Government of this country had no complaint against the Emperor, and no reason to be dissatisfied with his conduct, and that there was no unsettled question or ground of quarrel between the two countries. But one man had told him of a French order for ten thousand tons of iron plating for ships of war, and another man had told him of a large order for rifled cannons, and a third had talked of some flat-bottomed boats at Nantes. All these tendencies to increase his means of aggression in case of a desire to attack England, made it necessary, said Lord Palmerston, to increase our means of defence. Would it not be wiser—this is Cobden's reflection on Lord Palmerston's plea—"to act as private individuals would do in such a case, namely, ask an explanation of the meaning of such apparently unfriendly proceedings, and offer frankly to explain any acts in return, which might have a hostile complexion. But Governments are opposed to a simplification of their proceedings, or to bringing them under those rules of common sense which control the acts of everyday individual life."

On his way back to France, M. de Persigny, the French ambassador, came over from Hastings to Newhaven to discuss with him the prospects of commercial reform in France. Cobden thought highly of Persigny, spoke of him as "an honest and warm-hearted" creature, and recognized, as some of the bitterest enemies of the group who helped Louis Napoleon to the throne have always recognized, that

1859.
ÆT. 55.

Persigny's devotion to the Emperor would have stood the test of adverse fortune. However this may be, there can be no doubt of the French ambassador's zeal and sincerity on behalf of the new cause.

On the 17th of November, Cobden returned to Paris, so ill that he at once took to his bed, and was confined to his room for some days. Illness, however, did not quench his zeal, and he carried on the endless argument with the Ministers in his bedroom. It is not necessary to recount the course of negotiations from day to day, nor the busy and laborious discussions with M. Fould and M. Rouher. On December 9th, M. Chevalier informed Cobden that M. Rouher had prepared his plan for a Commercial Treaty, which would be submitted for the Emperor's approval on the next day. "There is but one man in the Government," M. Rouher had said, "the Emperor, and but one will, that of the Emperor." The will of this one man still remained uncertain. Lord Cowley who had been staying at Compiègne three weeks before, said the Emperor was strong for a Commercial Treaty with England, but since then his language had changed. He had once more found out how many difficulties were to be overcome. It had become, as he told Lord Cowley, "*une grosse affaire.*" The Emperor had been pressing M. Fould as to the precise advantage that France would gain in imitating the policy of England. England, said the Emperor, was so dependent on her foreign trade, that she was constantly in a state of alarm at the prospect of war. France, on the other hand, could find herself involved in war with comparatively little inconvenience. "This remark," says Cobden, to whom it was reported, "struck me as disclosing a secret instinct for a policy of war and isolation."

"Lord Cowley," he says in another place, "who

1859. knows the Emperor so well, smiled at the idea which so generally prevails of his being always actuated by some clever Machiavellian scheme, when he is often only committing indiscretions from too much simplicity, and want of statesmanlike forethought. He repeated the opinion which he had expressed before, that '*it is not in him*' to have any great plan for a political combination, extending into the future, and embracing all Europe."

ÆT. 55.

Better ideas prevailed at last. M. de Persigny had come over from London, to tell his master how hostile and dangerous was the state of opinion in England. For the first time in his experience, he said, he believed war to be possible, unless the Emperor took some step to remove the profound mistrust that agitated the English public. The security of the throne, he went on to urge, depended on the English alliance being a reality. So long as there was a solid friendship between England and France, they need not care what might be in the mind of Russia, Austria, or Prussia. This was the course of reasoning which, in Cobden's opinion, finally decided the Emperor. In other words, Napoleon assented to the Treaty, less because it was good for the French than because it would pacify the English. It was the only available instrument for keeping the English alliance.

M. Rouher presented his plan of a Commercial Treaty, together with sixty pages of illustrative reasoning upon it. The whole was read to the Emperor; he listened attentively through every page, approved it, and declared his intention of carrying it out. He then produced a letter which he had prepared, addressed to M. Fould, and intended for publication, in which he announced his determination to enter upon a course of pacific improvement, to

promote the industry of the country by cheapening transport, and so forth. 1859. ÆT. 55.

The project was now disclosed to Count Walewski, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Cobden was invited to have an interview with him. Once more he went over the ground along which he had already led Fould, Rouher, and the Emperor. "I endeavoured," says Cobden, "to remove his doubts and difficulties, and to fortify his courage against the Protectionist party, whose insignificance and powerlessness I demonstrated by comparing their small body with the immense population which was interested in the removal of commercial restrictions." The discussion with M. Walewski was followed by a second interview with the Emperor.

"*Dec.* 21.—Had an interview with the Emperor at the Tuileries. I explained to him that Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was anxious to prepare his Budget for the ensuing session of Parliament, and that it would be a convenience to him to be informed as soon as possible whether the French Government was decided to agree to a Commercial Treaty, as in that case he would make arrangements accordingly; that he did not wish to be in possession of the details, but merely to know whether the principle of a treaty was determined upon. The Emperor said he could have no hesitation in satisfying me on that point; that he had quite made up his mind to enter into the Treaty, and that the only question was as to the details. He spoke of the difficulties he had to overcome, owing to the powerful interests that were united in defence of the present system. 'The protected industries combine, but the general public do not.' I urged many arguments to encourage him to take a bold course, pointing out the very small number of the protected classes as

1859. compared with the whole community, and contending for the interests of the greatest number, rather than for those of the minority. He repeated to me the arguments which had been used by some of his Ministers to dissuade him from a Free Trade policy, particularly by M. Magne, his Finance Minister, who had urged that if he merely changed his system from prohibition to high protective duties, it would be a change only in name, but that if he laid on moderate duties which admitted a large importation of foreign merchandise, then, for every piece of manufactured goods so admitted to consumption in France, a piece of domestic manufacture must be displaced. I pointed out the fallacy of M. Magne's argument in the assumption that everybody in France was sufficiently clothed, and that no increased consumption could take place. I observed that many millions in France never wore stockings, and yet stockings were prohibited. He remarked that he was sorry to say that ten millions of the population hardly ever tasted bread, but subsisted on potatoes, chestnuts, etc. (I conclude this must be an exaggeration). I expressed an opinion that the working population of his country were in a very inferior condition as compared with those in England.

ÆT. 55.

"Referring to the details in his intended tariff, he said the duties would range from ten to thirty per cent. I pointed out the excessive rate of the latter figure, that the maximum ought not to exceed twenty per cent; that it would defeat his object in every way if he went as high as thirty per cent; that it would fail as an economical measure, whilst in a political point of view it would be unsuccessful, inasmuch as the people of England would regard it as prohibition in another form. He referred me to M. Rouher for further discussion of this question. He described to

1859.
ÆT. 55.

me the letter which he thought of publishing declaratory of his intention of entering on a course of internal improvement and commercial reform, and asked me whether it would not place him at a disadvantage with the British Government if he announced his policy beforehand, and whether they might not be inclined afterwards to withdraw from the Treaty. I replied that there might be other objections to his publishing such a letter, but this was not one, and that I was sure it would not be taken advantage of by our Government. We then talked of our immense preparation in naval armaments. I said I expected that in a few months we should have sixty line-of-battle ships, screws, in commission. He said he had only twenty-seven. Talking of the excited state of alarm in England, he said he was dictating to M. Mocquard a dialogue between a Frenchman and an Englishman, in which he should introduce all the arguments used in England to stimulate the present alarm of French aggression, and his answers to them, and he asked if I thought the *Times* would print it.

"Whilst we were in the midst of this familiar conversation, during which he smoked several cigarettes, the Empress entered the room, to whom I was introduced. She is a tall and graceful person, very amiable and gracious, but her features were not entirely free from an expression of thoughtfulness, if not melancholy. The Emperor is said by everybody to be very fascinating to those who come much in personal contact with him. I found him more attractive at this second audience than the first. His manner is very simple and natural. If there be any affectation, it is in a slight air of humility ('young ambition's ladder'), which shows itself with consummate tact in his voice and gestures."

1859. Æt. 55.

Cobden gives some further particulars in a letter to Mr. Bright (Dec. 29, 1859):—

"I saw the Emperor again for a full hour last week, as you would learn from your brother. Of course, I tried to employ every minute on my own topic, but he was in a talkative mood, and sometimes ran off on other subjects. It was at four o'clock; he had been busy all day, and I was surprised at the gaiety of his manner. He smoked cigarettes all the time, but talked and listened admirably. . . . On this occasion my private lesson was chiefly taken up with answering the arguments with which M. Magne, his Minister of Finance, who is a furious Protectionist, had been trying to frighten him. Here was one of them, which he repeated word for word to me: 'Sire, if you do not make a sensible reduction in your duties, the measure will be charged on you as an attempted delusion. If you do make a serious reduction, then for every piece of foreign manufacture admitted into France, you will displace a piece of domestic fabrication.' I of course laughed, and held up both hands, and exclaimed what an old friend that argument was; how we had been told the same thing a thousand times of corn; and how we answered it a thousand times by showing that a fourth part of the people were not properly fed. And then I showed how we had imported many millions of quarters of corn annually since the repeal of our Corn Law, whilst our own agriculture was more prosperous and productive than ever, and yet it *was all consumed.* I told him that his people were badly clothed, that nearly a fourth of his subjects did not wear stockings, and I begged him to remind M. Magne that if a few thousand dozens of hose were admitted into France, they might be consumed by these barelegged people,

without interfering with the demand for the native manufacture. . . . We then got upon the condition of the mass of the working people, where his sympathy is mainly centred, and on the effect of machinery, Free Trade, etc., on their fate. He said the Protectionists always argued that the working class engaged in manufactures were better off here than in England, and they always assumed that Free Trade would lower the condition of the French operatives. I told him that the operatives in France were working *twenty per cent more time* for *twenty per cent less wages*, and *paid upwards of ten per cent more for their clothing*, as compared with the same class in England. He seized a pen and asked me to repeat these figures, which he put down, observing, 'What an answer to those people!' I told him that if M. Magne or anybody else disputed my figures, I was prepared to prove them. But I need not repeat to you a course of argument with which we are so familiar."

After this interview the negotiation reached the stage of formal diplomacy. Cobden's position had hitherto been wholly unofficial. He had been a private person, representing to the French Emperor that he believed the English Government would not be indisposed to entertain the question of a Commercial Treaty. The matter came officially before Lord Cowley in the form of a request from Count Walewski that he would ascertain the views and intentions of his Government. Lord Cowley applied to Lord John Russell for official instructions to act, and in the course of the next month Cobden received his own instructions and powers. Meanwhile not a day was lost, and he brought the same tact and unwearied energy to the settlement of the details of the Treaty, which he had employed in persuading this

1860. Æt. 56.

little group of important men to accept its principles and policy. There was one singular personage, who ought from his keen faculties, his grasp of the principles of modern progress, and his position, to have been the most important of all, but in whom his gifts have been nullified by want of that indescribable something which men call character and the spirit of conduct. This was Prince Napoleon. Cobden had several conversations with him, and came to the conclusion that few men in France had a more thorough mastery of economic questions. He thus describes their first interview, which is interesting from the clearness with which it brings out how secondary or indirect an object the Commercial Treaty was in itself to the French Government, compared with its importance in their eyes as a means of strengthening the alliance between France and England :—

"*Jan.* 4.—Dined at M. Emile de Girardin's, and met Prince Napoleon, the son of Jerome, whose face bears a strong resemblance to the first Napoleon. After dinner I conversed apart with him for nearly an hour upon the subject of the proposed Treaty, to which he was strongly favourable. He verified the opinion I had heard of him as being favourable to Free Trade, and he spoke with much fluency and considerable knowledge on economical questions. He gives one the impression of great cleverness in a first interview. In the course of our conversation, in speaking of the relations between France and England, he said that he knew, from frequent conversations with the Emperor, that he desired, *du fond de son cœur*, to be at peace with England, and that he was led to this feeling by the perusal of the Life of his uncle, whose fall was attributable to the hostility of England, whose wealth furnished the

1860.
ÆT. 56.

sinews of war to the whole of Europe. I went over the whole of the arguments, political and economical, in favour of the Treaty; and he finally proposed to see the Emperor on the subject to-morrow.

"He informed me that M. Walewski had retired from the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.[1] This led to a long conversation upon the foreign policy of France. The Prince said that as there was to be no congress on Italian affairs, the only way in which they could be arranged was by a thorough alliance between France, England, and Sardinia, by whom the Italian territory must be held inviolate against foreign intervention, and that England must be prepared, in case Austria should violate this rule, to send a fleet into the Adriatic to co-operate with France against that Power. I told him that such an alliance with the present state of public opinion in England so hostile to, or so fearful of, the designs of the Emperor, was out of the question; that the only way to alter this state of doubt and suspicion was a declaration of views by the French Government favourable to a greater commercial intercourse between the two countries; that *letters* or *phrases* would have no effect; that acts alone, as displayed in a reform of the tariff, would inspire the English people with confidence in the pacific intentions of the Emperor. The Prince professed a perfect agreement, repeating my words that there had been enough and too many *phrases* and *letters*. He said that he feared the Emperor might not be firm in the affair of the Treaty; that he would be deterred from his purpose by reports which M. Billault, the Minister of the Interior, would give him of the hostile feelings

[1] Walewski's retirement was due to his disagreement with the Emperor on the subject of an Italian Confederation. He was succeeded by M. Thouvenel.

1860. Æt. 56. of the Protectionists, and their work-people at Rouen, Lille, etc.: that he had twice abandoned his purpose, and thrown over M. Rouher, whom he had previously encouraged to proceed with the reform of the tariff; that the Emperor, though he persists in arriving at an object which he has once resolved to attain, yet had a habit of deviating and stumbling by the way."

There were frequent interruptions, for, as Lord Palmerston once said, Napoleon's mind was as full of schemes as a warren is full of rabbits. Cobden was alarmed one day, for instance, by a story that the treaty of commerce was to be thrown aside in favour of a treaty of alliance for settling the affairs of Italy. Then the treaty of commerce was not to be thrown aside, but a political treaty was to be tacked on to it. "It is possible," Cobden wrote to Mr. Gladstone (Jan. 7, 1860), "that the Emperor may think *we* attach so much importance to the Treaty, that he can make it a bribe to make us agree to something else. Much as I am interested in the success of the good work, I would not allow such a stipulation to be made. The Emperor has more necessity for our alliance than we have for his just now." When this disquieting project vanished, the Emperor wished to submit the draft of the Treaty to the Legislative Body, notwithstanding the fact that he had himself assured Cobden that the Legislative Body was irreconcilably hostile to every manner of Free Trade.

After this there was one more fierce struggle at the council-table. M. Magne—a cannon-ball Protectionist, as Cobden described him—and M. Troplong, insisted that at any rate the Emperor was bound by his word of honour to have an inquiry before he abolished the prohibitive system. The

1860.
ÆT. 56.

Emperor yielded, and held a formal inquiry, which was limited to two days. Meanwhile, to show that he had no intention of drawing back, he sent to the *Moniteur*, what was for nine days a memorable document, the Letter to M. Fould. This letter was an announcement, in shadowy general terms, of the coming change; it had previously been submitted by the Emperor to Cobden, and at Cobden's suggestion some changes and additions had been made in it. Yet, though Cobden thus was not only the inspirer of the Treaty, but actually put words and principles into the Emperor's mouth, one of the favourite charges against the Treaty, when it came before Parliament in England, was that it was the result of a policy of subservience. With noble indignation one member of the House of Commons asked whether the free Parliament of Britain had assembled only to register the decrees of a foreign despot.

In France the Emperor's letter excited intense excitement. An eminent member of the English Parliament happened to be at the house of M. Thiers on the evening when the news of the Treaty was brought in, and he has described the sparkling fury of the great man at the Emperor's new card. The Protectionists hastened to Paris and appointed a strong committee to sit *en permanence*. The feeling was so violent that the greatest industrial personage in France told Cobden that his own nephew had refused to shake hands because he, the uncle, was a Free Trader. The Orleanists were disgusted that the Emperor should have the credit of doing a good thing, and Cobden heard one of the party declare, with much vehemence, at a dinner of the Political Economy Club, that to establish Free Trade in a country where public opinion was not

1860. Æt. 56.

ripe for it, was neither more nor less than gross oppression. Friends and foes, however, amid the hubbub of criticism, agreed in admiring the Emperor's courage. "You may form some idea of the position," Cobden wrote to Mr. Gladstone, "if you will imagine yourself in England in 1820, before Mr. Huskisson began his innovations in our tariff, with this serious disadvantage on the side of the French Government, that while the Protectionists have all the selfishness and timidity which characterized our 'interests' at that time, they arrogate to themselves an amount of social and political importance which our manufacturers never pretended to possess. . . . It would hardly be possible to assemble five hundred persons together by any process of selection, and not find nine-tenths of them at least in favour of the present restrictive system." Only thirteen years before, as we have seen, Louis Philippe had candidly told Cobden that the iron-masters and other protected interests commanded such an overwhelming majority in the Chamber, that it was utterly impossible to take a single step in the direction of Free Trade. Cobden had been warned from the first that the iron interest had powerful friends even within the walls of the imperial palace, and he felt this occult antagonism throughout the negotiation.

The resistance to the Treaty grew stronger every hour. A hundred and twenty cotton-spinners assembled in the courtyard of the Minister of the Interior, tumultuously crying for an immediate interview. M. Thiers was said to be calling for an audience with the Emperor. The Press teemed with articles and pamphlets, whose logic and temper betrayed the high pressure under which they had been composed. In Manchester, meanwhile, the Emperor's letter had created an exultant

excitement which had never been equalled since the day when Sir Robert Peel announced that he was about to repeal the Corn Laws. The letter had appeared on a Sunday (January 15th), and at the great market which used to draw men from every part of that thriving district on Tuesdays, the French Emperor was everywhere hailed as the best man in Europe. This intense satisfaction was due less to a desire for extended trade, than to the confidence that the Emperor intended peace, and had taken the most effectual means to make it permanent. The English newspapers, which every morning for months past had been accusing the Emperor of every sinister quality in statesmanship, now turned round so handsomely that M. Baroche told Cobden he wished they could be forced to moderate their compliments, as such flattery made the Treaty more unpopular in France.

1860. ÆT. 56.

A week after the publication of the letter, the Treaty was ready for execution, and the happy day arrived. The following is Cobden's entry in his journal :—

"*Jan.* 23.—Went to the Embassy at eight this morning, to revise for the last time the list of articles in the Treaty. At two o'clock the plenipotentiaries met at the Foreign Office, where the Treaty was read over by a clerk in French and English, after which it was duly signed and sealed.[1] It is wanting four days only of three months since I had my first interview with the Emperor at Saint-Cloud. The interval has been a period of almost incessant nervous irritation and excitement, owing

[1] Lord Cowley and Cobden signed on behalf of England, and M. Baroche—then Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs—and M. Rouher for France.

1860. ÆT. 56. to the delays and uncertainties which have constantly arisen. I can now understand not only the wisdom, but the benevolence, of Talleyrand, when he counselled a young diplomatist *not to be in earnest*. However, the work is at last at an end, and I hope it will pave the way for a change in the relations between these two great neighbours by placing England and France in mutual commercial dependence on each other."

Cobden's health had been so bad since his return to Paris in the middle of November, that the end of his business came none too soon. His throat and chest gave him incessant trouble, and the doctor urged a speedy flight to the lands of the sun. Lord Palmerston had written to him that "the climate of Paris is perhaps better than that of London, but then the French physicians are less in the habit of curing their patients than ours are." From climate and physicians alike Cobden was eager to escape. As it happened, the work was not even yet quite at an end. Some small verbal loosenesses were discovered in the Treaty. The negotiators had written English coke and coal, when they meant British, and harbour, when they meant shipping. It was rewritten, and again signed, the signatures and seals from the old Treaty having been duly cut off. This was on January 29.

Surprise has often been expressed that a man of Cobden's strong Liberalism should have been not only so willing to co-operate with Louis Napoleon, but so unable to enter into the feelings of Frenchmen towards a Government which, besides being lawless and violent in its origin, persisted in stifling the Press, corrupting the administration, silencing the popular voice, and from time

1860.
ÆT. 56.

to time sending great batches of untried and often innocent men to obscure and miserable death at Cayenne. A story is told of an Englishman of reputation at this time saying to a group which surrounded him in a Parisian drawing-room:—"But surely under your present Government France is prosperous; and surely you can do as you please." "Oh dear, yes," said a bystander, "if we wish only to eat, drink, and make money, we can do exactly as we please." It was said that Cobden thought too lightly of all those things, besides eating, drinking, and making money, which the best Frenchman might wish to do, and ought to be esteemed and praised for wishing to do. One or two remarks may be made upon this interesting point.

In the first place, economists have often been apt to treat the political side of affairs as secondary to the material side. Turgot, and the whole school of which he is the greatest name, systematically assumed that the reforms which they sought should proceed from an absolute central power. It was one of the distinctions of the Saint Simonians, to whom Cobden's friend Chevalier belonged, that they held strongly that government is good for something, and that authority is an indispensable principle of modern societies. M. Laffitte, the admirable chief of another earnest sect of social reformers, told an English traveller that he and his friends approved of the imperial *régime*. Cobden's attitude, therefore, was in harmony with that of many able and disinterested men who had nothing to do with the imperialist party, but who conscientiously thought that the existing Government, notwithstanding its heavy drawbacks, was better than the

1860. Æt. 56.

anarchy of utopists, anarchists, and talkers which it had superseded, and that it had at least the merit of preserving an amount and kind of order in which the ideas of a better system might grow up. Events, in the opinion of the present writer, only confirmed what sound political judgment might have led men to expect—namely, that this was a grave miscalculation. Sedan and the Treaty of Frankfort proved it. But if Cobden thought better of the Empire than it deserved, not a few good and high-minded Frenchmen erred with him.

Our second remark, however, is that Cobden was probably as well aware as others of the evils and perils of the Empire. He was no blind believer in the Emperor, as his letters testify. It was not his tendency to believe blindly in any Governments. But he always revolted from the pharisaical censoriousness and most unseemly licence with which English journalists and others are accustomed to write about the rulers and the affairs of foreign nations. He always inclined to moral, no less than to a material, non-intervention in the domestic doings of other countries, and thought it right to observe and counsel a language of scrupulous decency towards a Government in which the bulk of the French nation formally and deliberately acquiesced.

Apart from such considerations as these, Cobden would probably have defended himself for acting with such a Government as that of Louis Napoleon, by the plain argument that in politics it is wise not to throw away any opportunity of getting a good thing done. The Empire was there, and it was the part of sound sense to secure from it whatever compensation it might be made to afford

1860.
ÆT. 56.

for its flagrant and admitted disadvantages. It is sometimes said that the policy of Free Trade has been damaged in the opinion of France, by being thus associated with the ruined Empire. Apart from the fact that later Governments have not ventured to go back from the Treaty policy, if this plea against Cobden were in any degree true, we ought to find the desire for Protection strongest in those parts where dislike of the Empire is strongest. This is notoriously not the case. The feeling about the Treaty uniformly follows the interests of the people concerned, and is absolutely independent of any feeling as to the Government by which the Treaty was made.

This was in fact Cobden's own case. He knew as well as any one else that the position of the Emperor was that of a gambler, who might be driven by the chances of fortune to acts of desperation. But he insisted that, so far as England was concerned, the Emperor nursed no criminal designs, but, on the contrary, made friendship with England the keystone of his system. He insisted, moreover, that even if it were otherwise, still the most solid and durable check to the development of hostile purposes would be found in the promotion of close and deeply interested commercial intercourse between the people of the two countries. The change in the relations between the Governments of France and England for the last twenty years, in the language of the French and English Press, in the mutual sentiments of the two peoples, is the verification of Cobden's hope and foresight.

CHAPTER XXX

HOLIDAY AND RETURN TO PARIS

1860. Æt. 56.

Most men would have been content, after such an achievement as the Treaty, to sink instantly into the repose of a long holiday. If Cobden had been so exclusively interested in a mere increase of trade as his adversaries believed, he would have cared very little for the Italian question. As a matter of fact he cared intensely for it, and thought clearly about it. He had as definite ideas and as deep an anxiety about foreign affairs as Lord Palmerston himself. It was in method that the vast difference existed between them, not in the supposed fact that one had a foreign policy and the other had none. Cobden went straight from the Foreign Office, where he had just signed the revised Treaty, to the Austrian Embassy. Prince Metternich was not at home, but Cobden returned the next day and delivered his soul on the subject of Venetia, which was then jeoparding the European peace.

We have to remember that all this time the entanglements of Italy had been distracting the Powers. Throughout the negotiations on the Treaty, which, as we shall see, lasted until the autumn of 1860, the group of difficulties known as the Italian question engrossed the attention of every statesman in Europe. The Emperor of the French was more dangerously

1860.
ÆT. 56.

involved in these difficulties than any one else, not excepting Victor Emmanuel himself. The Treaties of Zurich, which gave definitive shape to the preliminaries agreed upon between Napoleon and Francis Joseph at Villafranca (July 11, 1859), had been signed during Cobden's short visit to London in November.

The base of these Treaties, which proved the most absolutely abortive documents in the whole history of diplomacy, was the proposed formation of an Italian Confederation under the honorary presidency of the Pope; the cession of Lombardy, save the two great fortresses of Peschiera and Mantua, to the King of Sardinia; admission of Venetia to the Italian Confederation, while remaining a possession of Austria; the restoration of the Dukes of Tuscany and Modena. There was, at the moment when Cobden saw Prince Metternich, no prospect of a single article of either Treaty being realized. The Grand Dukes dared not enter their former dominions. The Romagna would not receive back the agents of the Pope. The Italians would have nothing to say to a Confederation, and insisted on unity. The Pope protested, in language that was more energetic than saintly, against all that had been done, and denounced a pamphlet which was known to be written by the French Emperor as a monument of hypocrisy and an ignoble tissue of contradictions.[1]

The deadlock of the moment was unique. The force of circumstances had brought the European Powers to a policy of non-intervention, not by their own free will, but because the peril of departing from

[1] "The Emperor is decidedly too fond of seeing himself in print," Cobden wrote in his journal, when *Le Pape et le Congrès* appeared.

1860. it was grave and instant. The Emperor of Austria
ÆT. 56. and the Emperor of the French were equally bound by the Treaty of Zurich, but the Treaty of Zurich was desperate. Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, whose sympathies were generously given to the cause of Italy, were inclined to a course which might not improbably have drawn England into war.[1] The case was exactly that which many partisans of the general principle of non-intervention have taken as beyond the limits of that principle; it was a case, namely, of intervention by English diplomacy to enforce non-intervention by Austria in the rights of the people of Italy to settle their own government. However this may be, there was no objection to the informal diplomacy in which Cobden now innocently engaged, and those who realize the interest and prodigious peril of the Italian question in the early weeks of 1860 will perhaps care to know what was Cobden's advice to Austria. It was Austrian policy in regard to Venetia that made the cardinal difficulty.

"*Jan.* 30, 1860.—Called and conversed for nearly an hour with Prince Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, upon the subject of the affairs of Italy. I took special care at the outset to explain to him that I held no diplomatic or other official post; that the Treaty of Commerce having been signed, for which alone I had been named plenipotentiary, I reverted to my former capacity of an independent member of Parliament, having no connexion with the English Government; and that neither Lord Cowley nor any one else was aware of my intention of calling on the Prince. I then observed that the interest I felt in the cause of European peace, and the fear I felt lest a rupture might again take place

[1] See Mr. Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. chapter 15, p. 382. Mem. of Jan. 5, 1860.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

on the Italian question, had emboldened me to call to ask his attention for a few minutes to what I had to say, premising that I did not ask or expect him to offer any opinion in reply. I began by explaining very frankly the state of public opinion in England, as well as in the United States, on the Italian question; that the popular sympathies were everywhere strongly in favour of the Italians; and that if another struggle should arise for the independence of Venetia, and especially if it were attended with slaughter of civilians, or sack of an unarmed community, it would be very difficult for any Government in England to prevent the feeling of horror and resentment from assuming the form of material aid to the Italians. I then proceeded to hint whether, in such a state of things as existed in Venetia, it would not be true wisdom in the Austrian Government to contemplate some arrangement by which the danger of war might be averted; that there were people now speculating on the prospects of war this spring, and they might not be unwilling to promote such a result; and I then frankly added that I did not believe there was any other mode by which the danger could be effectually met but by abandoning Venetia to the Italians, taking in return an indemnity which I thought might be made to amount to a very important sum of money.

"I then continued (as he did not seem desirous of taking a part in the conversation) to urge some reasons for entertaining such an idea. I showed the great pecuniary loss which Austria suffered from the possession of Venetia; that the cost of holding the province in subjection was far more than its income; that I believed there were now so many soldiers in possession of Venetia, that they were equal to one for every ten of the entire population; that this state

1860. ÆT. 56.

of things was growing every year worse and worse, and that whilst the present cost was so burdensome to the resources of Austria, the imminent danger of the future prevented her Government from directing its energies to the improvement of the internal resources of the Empire.

"He now gradually took a part in the conversation, giving me credit for the singleness of purpose which had induced me to call on him, and said that my antecedents upon the question of peace, and the extension of commerce, were a justification for the course I was taking. He frankly avowed that he did not justify everything that his Government had been doing of late in Italy, and that he blamed especially the mode in which they had commenced the war last year. He observed that, speaking only his own individual sentiments, he did not consider that, 'if the interests of the peace of Europe called for such an arrangement,' it would be 'absolutely impossible' for Austria to come to terms with Venetia, by which their relations might be placed upon a different footing. He hinted at the appointment of a Grand Duke with greater local powers. His ideas did not go to the extent of a complete alienation of territory. Indeed, he expressed an opinion that the great body of the population of Venetia were not so much disaffected towards the present order of things as was supposed; that the agitation against the Austrian Government was factitious, and so forth.

"I endeavoured to combat this view by drawing his attention to the immense military force kept up. He said that this was rendered necessary by the hostile attitude of their next neighbour. I pointed to this as an inevitable state of things; and I observed that, although I had no sympathy for the dynastic ambition of the King of Sardinia, or for the plans of

annexation which were entertained by his Minister, still it could not be denied that the kingdom of Sardinia was a growing power, possessing to a large extent the sympathy of the world, and that therefore the permanent influence of that State, as a hostile neighbour, must always be taken into account in the value to be put upon Venetia. I declared my belief that the two races would become every year more and more alienated, and that it would be impossible permanently to keep possession of Venetia, or that it could only be held at a ruinous loss to the Government of Vienna. I remarked that whilst Austria possessed Lombardy, she had a comparatively ancient title to her Italian possessions, but she had come into such recent possession of her Venetian territory, and the mode in which Venice had been given over to her by Bonaparte, at Campo Formio, was such an outrage upon all justice and decency, that Europe felt a sort of shame at having been made a party to such an act of violence at the Congress of Vienna, and it would be held by many to be a duty to contribute towards a redress of the evil.

1860. ÆT. 56.

"He said that Austria was peculiarly circumstanced; that it was a collection of nationalities; and that it would be a serious thing to begin a process of selling the independence of a province of the Empire. I said there was no analogy between the state of Venetia and that of Hungary or Bohemia; that nobody considered the latter kingdoms as being anxious for complete separation from Austria, but merely as aiming at a reform in their administration —a question about which foreigners were comparatively little concerned. Whereas, on the contrary, the Italian question engrossed the attention of the political world, and everywhere it was regarded as a danger to the peace of Europe. He said it would

1860. Æt. 56.

be a very delicate question what would become of the province of Venetia if it were abandoned; that it might possibly be annexed to Piedmont, and there would probably be objections to the aggrandisement of the military monarchy. On the other hand, the Italian states might quarrel or fall into anarchy, and call for the intervention of neighbouring states. He alluded to the serious consideration of how far it would be wise in Austria to give up so powerful a strategic position as the great fortresses presented, that the Italian Tyrol might be attacked, or the territory on the Adriatic, etc. I said that the wisest course for Austria would be to give the full control of their future destinies to the population of Venetia; that a magnanimous policy was the best, and the only one becoming a great Empire; that it would, besides, be quite useless to attempt to bind the people of Venetia, for that the world was more and more inclined to recognize the rights of the people to choose their own mode of government, and their own alliances and amalgamation; and, therefore, that if the people of Venetia chose to annex themselves to Piedmont, it would not be likely that any Power would interfere to prevent them. As respected the great fortresses, I said that I would not advise their being given up but destroyed, that I would blow them up, and, if possible, raze them to the ground.

"I then came to the plain statement of the plan I would follow. I would sell the independence of Venetia for a large sum, which no doubt might be easily arranged; with that money, say twenty or thirty millions sterling, I would put the finances of the Austrian Government in order, restore the currency, re-establish my credit, and then apply myself to the internal reforms of the Empire. I knew no

country where there was such a field for improvement as in Austria; that a few years of fiscal and commercial amelioration would add immensely to the wealth and power of the Empire; that, even with the loss of the Italian provinces, the population of Austria would be about equal to that of France, and greater than that of England, and would contain resources which, if properly developed, might in a few years make her one of the richest and most prosperous countries in Europe. I at the same time pointed out the evils which must arise from the present state of the finances and the currency in Austria; that all mercantile operations, and all contracts between individuals, must be rendered more and more difficult and insecure, so long as the future of the Empire is involved in so much uncertainty, and whilst the circulating medium is subjected to such constant depreciation. 1860. ÆT. 56.

"The Prince showed much earnestness of feeling in his conversation. He wore an humbled air, as well he might, considering the topic on which we were conversing, which was nothing less than whether it would be advisable to sell a part of the Empire to save the rest. After reiterated apologies for the liberty I had taken in calling on him, which he received in the best possible spirit, I left him. If I could spend a month in Vienna, and see the leading men in the Government circles there, I feel a presentiment that I could bring them to my views on this difficult and important subject."

The next day Cobden started for the south of France, and he remained there until the last week in March. He made Cannes his headquarters, and hoped for sunshine and warmth. Unluckily, cloudy skies and keen winds confirmed his opinion that, if we would make sure of a second summer in the year,

1860. ÆT. 56.

it cannot be had in Europe; men must imitate the swallows and migrate into Africa. Cobden's elastic and joyful temperament, however, atoned for defects of climate, and his diary is a record of lively excursions and genial intercourse with friends. Among his daily companions were Bunsen, Henri Martin, Arles-Dufour, Legouvé, Mérimée, and occasionally Lord Brougham. Those who have been accustomed to think of Cobden as wrapped up in tariffs and the vulgarities of Parliament might well be amazed at the eagerness with which he notes the house to which Rachel was brought to die, and the circumstances of her last hours; at his enthusiasm for the fine landscapes; at the sincerity of interest with which he listened for long hours while Bunsen talked to him about Egyptian antiquities, and read his latest successes in deciphering hieroglyphs. Every day brought to his curious and observant mind new stores of information, political, social, and industrial, and still he had interest left for gossip and the trivialities that help such men across from one serious thought to another.

The people of the country wished to make their visitor useful; and three of the principal inhabitants of Grasse came to beg of him that when he returned to Paris he would say a word to M. Rouher in favour of a railroad from Grasse to Cannes. "I remarked," says Cobden, "that in England a rich and industrious community like theirs would have a meeting, and form a company to make a line for themselves, seeing that it was calculated that it would pay a good interest for the investment. They replied that it was not their way of doing things in France; they were accustomed to look to the Government to take the initiative; and as other parts of France were assisted by Government, they

might as well be assisted also. They said that in the month of May, when the flowers were brought into Grasse for making them into scented waters, pomades, etc., one house would sometimes receive several tons of rose-leaves in a morning." 1860. ÆT. 56.

In the course of his stay, Cobden paid a visit to some friends at Nice, where the expected annexation to France was the general topic of conversation among people of all classes. It is perhaps worth while, considering the violent agitation which this transaction was shortly to rouse in England, to reproduce Cobden's impression of the public feeling on the spot:—"I found it very difficult," he says, "to ascertain the prevailing state of opinion on the subject. As a general rule, I found that people's inclinations in the matter followed pretty closely the direction of their personal interests. The shopkeepers and tradespeople of the town, who thought their business would be improved by the change, were in favour of annexation. The professional men, the advocates, and lawyers, whose interests would suffer, were generally opposed to the project. The landowners and peasants were said by some to be favourable, and by others to be opposed. It was very difficult to ascertain the state of public opinion, for almost every person I consulted differed from the one I had previously talked to. Sometimes I found members of the same household divided in opinion. Whilst talking to M. A., a banker, in his counting-house, who was using various reasons in favour of annexation, his clerks, who were in an adjoining office, separated by a glass partition, and who overheard his remarks, were expressing by signs and gestures their dissent from his remarks. Again, on the same day, whilst calling on M. D., who was offering an opinion to the effect that the population

1860. Æt. 56.

generally were in favour of the proposed change, he was contradicted very emphatically by a lady who was present."

On the 22nd of March, Cobden found himself once more in Paris.

"*March* 26. — Called on Lord Cowley. He appeared harassed and worried. Since I last saw him, the Savoy question had come to a crisis; and the correspondence had all been published in a Parliamentary Blue book. He and his Secretary of Legation complained of the practice of printing the despatches giving an account of the conversations held with foreign Ministers or other personages, remarking that these reports of what passes at a gossiping interview may be very proper for the eye of a Secretary of State, but become very inconvenient when exposed to the eye of the whole world; that their publication has the effect of making Ministers of State unwilling to hold oral communications with diplomatic agents. Lord C. complained of the conduct of the Emperor in the Savoy question; alleged broadly that he had been deceived by him; that for the first time he had acted in such a way as to completely destroy all confidence in future in him; he stated that he had, in an interview with the Emperor, told him frankly that he had not acted towards the English Government and its ambassador with the openness which had characterized all their previous intercourse; that it was less the question of the annexation of Savoy than the way in which it was effected, which caused the present coolness and alienation between the two Governments. . . .

"*March* 28.—Called on M. Fould, the Minister of State, and had half an hour's conversation with him. Speaking of the misunderstanding which had

arisen between the French and English Governments since I last saw him, just before my departure for Cannes, he complained of Lord John Russell, our Foreign Minister, and observed that he had been always in their way; that he was opposed to the Treaty of Villafranca, and afterwards was the chief cause why the terms of that Treaty were not carried out and the Grand Dukes restored to their sovereignties. I remarked that it was utterly out of the question that force should have been resorted to for the restoration of the Dukes. He replied that force would not have been necessary if England had given her moral support to the principle, but that Lord John Russell encouraged the Italian people to resist the wishes of the French Emperor, and thus rendered the fulfilment of the Treaty of Villafranca impossible; that it was in consequence of this that the change in the Emperor's plans became necessary, and that the annexation of Savoy was afterwards resorted to; that if the terms of the Peace of Villafranca could have been carried out, France would not have thought of any extension of her frontier. In the course of conversation, he said that the English Court were much opposed to the French Government, and that Prince Albert was very Austrian in his sympathies.

1860. ÆT. 56.

"*March* 29.—Dined with Prince Napoleon and the Princess Clotilde, and met a large party. The company were less than an hour at the table. The present Emperor has introduced the fashion of using great despatch at the dinner-table.

"*March* 30.—Had an audience with the Emperor in the morning at the Tuileries. After saying a few words about my visit to Cannes, and expressing his congratulations that the British Parliament had at last passed the Treaty of Commerce, he referred to the state of the relations between his Government and

1860. Æt. 56. that of England upon the subject of the annexation of Savoy to France. He complained of the manner in which he was attacked, and in which his conduct and motives were misrepresented by the Press of England, and by some of the speakers in the House of Commons. I remarked that I had not had the opportunity of reading the papers laid before Parliament upon the Savoy question, and was not therefore in possession of the facts of the case, but as far as I understood the ground of the misunderstanding which had unfortunately arisen between the two Governments, since I last had the honour of an audience with his Majesty, it was caused less by what his Government had actually done, in annexing Savoy and Nice to France, than by the manner in which it had been effected. He then volunteered an explanation in a few words of what had been his course from the beginning on this question; changing from English, in which we had before been speaking, to French, for the more convenient and rapid delivery of his narrative.

"He said that, previous to entering on the war against Austria, he had had an understanding with the King of Sardinia and Count Cavour, to the effect that if the result should be the driving of the Austrians out of Lombardy and Venetia, and the annexing of those provinces to Piedmont, then France would require the fulfilment of two conditions on the part of the King of Sardinia, viz. the payment of the expenses of the war (which the Emperor said had amounted to 300,000,000 francs), and the cession of Savoy and Nice. These terms were assented to, in a general way, by the Government of Sardinia. The result of the war had been less decisive than he had expected; he acquired only Lombardy, which he had annexed to Piedmont, without the intention of claim-

ing Savoy, and not intending to ask for more than a portion of the expenses of the war. The subsequent events, which had induced him to change his views, were wholly unexpected by him, and they were brought about in spite of his efforts to prevent them. Central Italy refused to take back its former rulers, and insisted on annexation to Piedmont, which gave the latter Power as large an acquisition of territory, and as great a population in Italy (about 11,000,000), as if Venetia had been added to its dominions. Under these circumstances he had felt justified in claiming the cession of Savoy. 1860. ÆT. 56.

"After finishing this narrative, he again recurred to the attacks and misrepresentations to which he was exposed. He said he was quite *désolé* to find that, in spite of his frank and loyal policy towards other Powers, he was still exposed to such unjust charges. I remarked that too much importance was sometimes attached to the strictures of a newspaper writer, or the language of a member of the House of Commons; that he knew the state of things in England too well to require to be told that any writer could publish whatever he pleased anonymously, and that a member of the House could utter whatever opinions he liked; that people sometimes fell into the error of regarding the utterances of an individual, who was perhaps actuated by very unworthy personal motives, as the expression of a large public opinion; and I added the declaration of my belief that this misunderstanding between the two countries would be of an evanescent character; that it would admit of explanations which would remove all grounds of serious disagreement. He joined in the expression of this wish. I then observed that I could see but one possible cause of war between the two countries; that the mercantile and manufacturing and mining

1860. Æt. 56.

interests have the power and determination to keep the peace so long as it is their interest to do so; but the danger, and in my own opinion the only danger, was that the expenditure for our warlike armaments might be so increased that it would some day be possible to present to the people the argument that war might be less costly than the perpetual burden of a war expenditure in a time of peace; that I had heard very sedate and grave persons argue in this way; and that, leaving out of the question the sacrifice of life and limb, it was difficult to answer their reasoning on economical grounds. I mentioned the enormous sums we were voting this year for our armaments.

"He said he did not know what he could do to prevent it, or how he was responsible for such a state of things; that, as regarded the navy, he was not spending so much on it as he ought to do, or as was laid down as necessary in Louis Philippe's time; and he referred to the dialogue between an Englishman and a Frenchman, which he had composed and sent for publication to the *Times* newspaper; it contained some exact details respecting the strength of the French navy. I reminded him that his experiments on iron-cased ships had led us into some expenses of the same kind. I mentioned that I had seen one of his *frégates blindées* at Toulon, with an iron casing about four inches in thickness; that no sooner were they ordered to be built, than we began to construct line-of-battle ships with iron sides six inches thick, and that Mr. Whitworth had subsequently invented a gun which had projected a bullet through this thickness of iron, in addition to a couple of feet of solid timber; that I thought all this a very deplorable waste, and unworthy of the age in which we lived.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

"We then talked of the Treaty of Commerce, and the remaining details which are yet to be settled. I argued that it was more than ever desirable, in the present unsatisfactory state of the relations between the two Governments, that this treaty, which was intended to unite the peoples of France and England in the bonds of commercial dependence, should be completely carried out. I urged several reasons why the duties should be moderate. He expressed his concurrence in this, and said the only subject on which he felt any anxiety was that of iron; that the difficulty was the want of railroads to convey the ore to the coal; that in two years' time he hoped this evil would be remedied.

"On my rising to depart, he asked me to accept a vase as a souvenir. I left my address in London where it would be delivered. I hope it will be of small value.[1]

"*March* 31.—Dined at M. Rouher's, the Minister of Commerce, where a large party was assembled, everybody present except myself being decorated with orders and ribbons. I sat beside Prince Napoleon, and had a good deal of conversation upon the subject of our rival armaments. . . . He did not think it was impossible to come to an agreement for limiting the naval forces of the two countries; but he thought that whilst our aristocracy retained its present power, it would be very difficult to carry out such a policy in England. He repeated several times, and with emphasis, that it would not be impossible on the part of France. In the course of conversation, when speaking of the inaptitude of the French for self-government, he remarked, 'And yet they are always crying out for liberty! They want

[1] The vase may be seen at the South Kensington Museum, whither Mrs. Cobden sent it shortly after the death of her husband

1860. ÆT. 56.

the right of governing themselves, and yet they claim the right of exempting themselves from the *duties* of self-government.'"

A day or two after, Cobden returned to England. And here we may for a moment turn from his public activity to say so much as may be necessary about some of his private concerns. The subject is painful enough, just as it is painful even at this distance of time to think of Burke's genius being humiliated and impeded by the straits of embarrassed circumstances. So much publicity, however, was given to Cobden's affairs, partly by the spleen of political adversaries, and partly by the indiscretion of friends, that it is proper to describe the transaction of this period as it really was. A few lines fortunately will suffice. We have seen that of the sum raised in 1846 as a proof of the public gratitude for his services in the cause of Free Trade, the bulk had been employed in meeting the heavy losses incurred in Cobden's business, during the time when he was absorbed in the agitation against the Corn Laws. What happened to the balance which had been invested in the shares of the Illinois Central Railway, we have also seen. There was, moreover, the continued drain of the chief rent on the unhappy purchase of land at Manchester.[1] The upshot was that, after his return from the United States, Cobden found his resources practically exhausted, and his position had become extremely serious.

Under these circumstances he applied to one of his oldest and most confidential friends in Manchester for aid and advice. What he sought was that a few men who could afford to wait for a return on their money, might be induced to buy the building land from him at a certain valuation, which should include

[1] Vol. i. p. 173.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

some of that prospective value which he insisted on seeing in it. In this letter he said to his friend, in words that will touch all who can think gently of a man for taking too little heed of his own interests, for the sake of the commonwealth: "My hair," he said, "has been growing grey latterly with the thoughts of what is to become of my children. If I were to consult my duty to them, I should withdraw from Parliament, and accept some public employment, by which I might earn £2000 a year. The present Ministry have, through my friend Lord H——, sounded me as to my willingness to take such an office. But I see the difficulty of justifying my withdrawal from Parliament at the present time. . . . It is one of the miseries of a public man's life that he must be liable under such circumstances to have his private troubles gibbeted before the whole world."[1]

It is not necessary to follow the course of what followed. It was found that nothing effectual could be done with the land. So a little group of Cobden's most intimate friends took counsel together, and in the end a subscription was privately raised which amounted to the sum of £40,000. The names of those who contributed to it, between ninety and a hundred persons in all, he never knew. He requested that a list might be given to him in a sealed cover. After his death the executors found the envelope in his desk, with the seal still unbroken. Such an endowment was a gracious and munificent testimonial to his devoted public spirit. The fact that Cobden had so richly earned the gift, made him, as it may make us, none the less sensible of the considerate liberality of the givers.

[1] *To Mr. John Slagg*, Sept. 5, 1859.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TARIFF—THE FORTIFICATION SCHEME

1860. Æt. 56.

It is not necessary for us to follow the fortunes of the Treaty in England. They belong rather to our fiscal and parliamentary history, than to the biography of one of the negotiators. The Treaty was laid before Parliament by Lord John Russell, and its provisions were fully explained, along with the changes which the Government proposed in our fiscal system as a consequence of this Treaty, by Mr. Gladstone in a memorable speech (Feb. 10), which for lucidity and grasp has never been surpassed. He did not forget to pay a just tribute to his absent colleague. "Rare," said Mr. Gladstone, "is the privilege of any man who, having fourteen years ago rendered to his country one signal and splendid service, now again within the same brief span of life, decorated neither by rank nor title, bearing no mark to distinguish him from the people whom he serves, has been permitted again to perform a great and memorable service to his country."

The leader of the Opposition did not fall far behind in civil words, while conveying in his compliment to Cobden a characteristic sneer at the hated Whigs? Mr. Disraeli (Feb. 20) took credit for having recognized the great ability and the honourable and eminent position of the secret agent of the Treaty,

1860.
ÆT. 56.

long before they had been recognized by those "sympathizing statesmen of whom he was somehow doomed never to be the colleague." But at the same time, he detected in the Treaty the idiosyncrasies of the negotiator: he saw the negotiator's strong personal convictions in the wanton sacrifice of so many sources of revenue; he saw it in the light treatment of belligerent rights.

Then the parliamentary battle began according to the well-known rules. Private secretaries rapidly hunted up the circumstances of Pitt's Commercial Treaty of 1786, and their chiefs set to work to show that the precedent had been accurately followed, or else, if they happened to sit on the other side of the House, that it had been most unreasonably departed from. Men whose intellectual position was so strong as that of Sir James Graham and Earl Grey, protested against the policy of Commercial Treaties. One member, as I have already mentioned, still happily alive and vocal, asked if it had come to this —that the free Parliament of England sat to register the decrees of the despot of France. There was the usual abundance of predictions, in which the barely possible was raised to the degree of probable or certain, and to which the only answer was that men were not bound to believe them. The great authority from the city prophesied that there would be no permanent enlargement of our trade with France as a consequence of the Treaty. Mr. Disraeli declared that he had always strongly desired an improvement of our commercial relations with France, and even if that improvement took the form of a Commercial Treaty he could endure it: but this was a bad Treaty; it was calculated to sow the seeds of discord and dissension between the two countries. Mr. Disraeli's chief in the House of Lords argued

1860. Æt. 56.

that the time was inopportune for a reduction of the sources of revenue; and he pointed out that the Treaty admitted to France articles of vital importance for purposes of war, and the Government itself acted in other respects as if war were not improbable. Here Lord Derby made a point, as Cobden would have been the first to admit. The policy of 1860 was a double policy. The Treaty implied confidence in peace, while the estimates implied a strong expectation of war. If war were as near a contingency as the tone of some of the Ministers seemed to show, then the Budget of 1860 was open to the criticism on the Budget of 1853, the great Peace Budget which immediately preceded the Crimean War.

After much skirmishing, the real debate came on in the House of Commons, on a motion that it was not expedient to diminish the sources of revenue, nor to reimpose the Income Tax at a needlessly high rate. The discussion extended over three nights, and at the end of it the division gave to the Government a majority of 116. Mr. Gladstone had met happily enough the serious objections, as distinguished from those which were invented in the usual way of party business. Nothing, he said, was given to France which was of any value to us. On the other hand, nothing was received from France except a measure by which that country conferred a benefit upon itself. At a small loss of revenue we had gained a great extension of trade. These propositions told with great weight against the theoretic objection that a Commercial Treaty tends to mislead nations as to the true nature of the transaction. In any case this was an objection which was very little calculated to affect a body endowed with the rough and blunt intellectual temper of the House of Commons.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

On his arrival in London, meanwhile, at the beginning of April, Cobden found that the Government had determined to send out a Commission to arrange the details of the tariff. The Commission was to consist of a chief and two official subordinates. The subordinates had already been named: one from the Board of Trade, and another from the Customs. The latter was represented by Mr. R. A. Ogilvie, the late Surveyor-General of Customs, and the Board of Trade was represented by Mr. Louis Mallet, who speedily impressed Cobden, as the diaries show, by his strong intelligence and efficiency, and who afterwards became one of the most eminent advocates of Cobden's principles to be found among English statesmen. The Government thought that it would be beneath Cobden's dignity to accept the office of chief commissioner and to correspond with the Board of Trade, after having been a plenipotentiary and having corresponded with the Foreign Office. Cobden began to fear that the chief who might be appointed would not prove quite a man after his own heart, so, he says, "as I felt no concern whatever about the loss of dignity, I volunteered to come out to Paris myself as chief commissioner, and to sign the supplementary Treaty as plenipotentiary when it is completed. I am afraid I have undertaken a very difficult and tedious task. But having begun the good work, I must pursue it to the end, and probably I could not transfer it to other hands without damage to the cause."[1]

In fact, it was clear that though the diplomatic or political part of the work had been effectually done, the more difficult commercial part still remained. The Treaty was hardly more than a rough and provisional sketch. When it reached the Board of

[1] *To M. Chevalier*, April 14, 1860.

1860. ÆT. 56.

Trade, the amazement of that office was not altogether pleasurable, for a department is capable of self-love, and the officials privately felt that they had been made rather light of. It was soon perceived that from the point of view of their office the Treaty did not carry things far. In the first article the Emperor had engaged that in no case should the duties on a long list of articles of British production and manufacture exceed thirty per cent. This was to be the limit. But a duty of thirty per cent was nearly as bad as prohibition. All depended on the results of the thirteenth article. Article thirteen ran to the effect that the *ad valorem* duties established within the limits fixed by the preceding articles should be converted into specific duties by a Supplementary Convention.[1]

[1] It may be convenient here to reproduce the description of the terms of the Treaty, from Mr. Gladstone's speech explaining it to the House of Commons:—"First," he said, "I will take the engagements of France. France engages to reduce the duty on English coal and coke, from the 1st of July 1860; on bar and pig iron and steel, from the 1st of October 1860; on tools and machinery, from the 1st of December 1860; and on yarns and goods in flax and hemp, including, I believe, jute—this last an article comparatively new in commerce, but one in which a great and very just interest is felt in some great trading districts,—from the 1st of June 1861. That is the first important engagement into which France enters. Her second and greater engagement is postponed to the 1st of October 1861. I think it is probably in the knowledge of the Committee that this postponement is stipulated under a pledge given by the Government of France to the classes who there, as here, have supposed themselves to be interested in the maintenance of prohibition. On the 1st of October, then, in the year 1861, France engages to reduce the duties and to take away the prohibitions on all the articles of British production mentioned in a certain list, in such a manner that no duty upon any one of those articles shall thereafter exceed thirty per cent *ad valorem*. I do not speak of articles of food, which do not materially enter into the Treaty; but the list to which I refer, includes all the staples of British manufacture, whether of yarns, flax, hemp, hair, wool, silk, or cotton,—all manufactures of skins, leather, bark, wood; iron, and all other metals; glass, stoneware, earthenware, or porcelain. I will not go

1860.
Æt. 56.

If it appears absurd that Cobden should ever have been content with an arrangement that left the French with a possible protection so high as thirty per cent, we must recall the conditions of the case. Hitherto the system in France had been one of absolute prohibition. It was the system of monopolies in all its perfection and completeness. Suddenly to break down this high wall of exclusion was politically impossible. To tell the great iron-masters, the cotton-spinners, the woollen manufacturers, that they were to pass at a step from monopoly to free competition, would be to shake the very Throne. A duty in their favour of no more than ten per cent would have seemed a mockery to men who had been accustomed to command their own prices. The Emperor dared

through the whole list; it is indeed needless, for I am not aware of any great or material article that is omitted. France also engages to commute those *ad valorem* duties into rated duties by a separate convention, to be framed for the purpose of giving effect to the terms I have described. But if there should be a disagreement as to the terms on which they should be rated under the convention, then the *maximum* chargeable on every class at thirty per cent *ad valorem* will be levied at the proper period, not in the form of a rated duty, but upon the value; and the value will be determined by the process now in use in the English Customs.

"I come next, sir, to the English covenants. England engages, with a limited power of exception, which we propose to exercise only with regard to two or three articles, to abolish immediately and totally all duties upon all manufactured goods. There will be a sweep, summary, entire, and absolute, of what are known as manufactured goods from the face of the British tariff. Farther, England engages to reduce the duty on brandy, from 15s. the gallon to the level of the colonial duty, viz. 8s. 2d. per gallon. She engages to reduce immediately the duty on foreign wine. In the Treaty it is of course French wine which is specified; but it is perfectly understood between France and ourselves, that we proceed with regard to the commodities of all countries alike. England engages, then, to reduce the duty on wine, from a rate nearly reaching 5s. 10d. per gallon, to 3s. per gallon. She engages, besides a present reduction, farther to reduce that duty from the 1st of April 1861, to a scale which has reference to the strength of the wine measured by the quantity of spirit it contains."

1860. Æt. 56. not open the battle with a lower protection than thirty per cent. It was for the English Government to have this brought down to as near ten per cent as they could. M. Rouher, who believed faithfully in free competition, hoped and intended that this process of beating down the great duty allowed by the terms of the Treaty should be effectively carried out. Cobden knew much better than his critics how much remained to be done; but then he trusted M. Rouher and the Emperor. This was the merit of his diplomacy, that he knew whom he could trust; and he always felt that here, and not in perpetual suspicion, is the secret of effective and wise diplomacy, as distinguished from the policy of craft and war. The result showed in the present instance, that the Emperor and M. Rouher deserved his confidence.

Cobden arrived in Paris on April 20th, and it was the 5th of November before his labours were concluded. They were of the most toilsome and fatiguing kind. The circumstances were without precedent or example, and the whole course of procedure had to be created. When the English commissioners reached Paris, they found that the French Government had agreed to refer the subject of the rates of duty to the Conseil Supérieur, a body rarely convoked, and consisting of the greatest commercial men in France. The Conseil Supérieur took evidence from French and English manufacturers and producers, as to the comparative cost of production in the two countries. Iron had been dealt with in the Treaty itself, and it was the only article on which the rate was there definitely fixed. All other articles were left open. What Cobden and his colleagues had to do was in the first instance to prepare the English witnesses, to collect and shape their evidence, and to have it carefully translated for

1860.
ÆT. 56.

the Conseil Supérieur. This tedious process lasted until the end of July. It was August before the sittings of the definitive Commission began. The business which Cobden and his two official colleagues had now to do, was nothing less than to go through the whole list of British products and manufactures, and to prove in each case to the French Commissioners that from the circumstances of the special trade they ought to be content with a given duty. Every day at two o'clock the three Englishmen sat round a table in one of the saloons of the palace in the Quai d'Orsai, with about three times as many representatives of the hostile interests of France. The various products of British industry came up in turn. The French Commissioners cried for their import duty of thirty per cent. Cobden called for ten per cent. Then the battle began. The English numbered no more than the Graces, while the French were as many as the Muses. The French, in strategical language, were close to their base of operations, for if they wanted more knowledge as to a given trade, there were men who were quite able and only too happy to supply it in the next street or in the anteroom. The Englishmen were dependent on the accident of the right man having come to Paris from home. They were obliged to represent all branches of industry, to master the important facts of a hundred special trades, to meet from their own second-hand knowledge, picked up the evening before and digested in the forenoon, antagonists whose knowledge was personal and acquired by a life's experience. The enterprise called for nothing less than the dexterity and pliancy of a first-rate advocate, united to the dogged industry of the compiler of a commercial encyclopædia. Iron gave most trouble. Though the rate had been fixed in the Treaty, the classifica-

1860. tion of its descriptions remained. The iron-masters, Cobden told Mr. Bright, "are the landed interest of France. They constitute the prætorian guards of monopoly. Almost everybody of rank and wealth is directly or indirectly interested in iron-works of some kind. Bankers, courtiers, authors (Thiers and St. Marc Girardin, to wit), bishops, and priests, are to be found in the ranks of the iron-masters. M. Schneider—the Duke of Richmond of the interest—is one of the Commission sitting to try himself. The French witnesses, of course, all tell the old story of alarm and ruin, and discourse most feelingly of the misery which their work-people will suffer if their protection be withdrawn. . . . I am transported back twenty years."

ÆT. 56.

Apart from the monotony of these proceedings, what to Cobden was harder to bear than tedium, was the dishonesty and bad faith of some of those with whom he had to deal. The more unscrupulous among the Protectionists falsified the facts of their various trades, and played dishonest tricks with returns of cost, wages, and prices. On one occasion, a French commissioner, who had made himself the mouthpiece of the Protectionists, tried to counter some demand of Cobden's by one of these fabrications. Cobden, worn out by the iteration of such shameless devices, could no longer contain himself, and in angry tones called out too crude a statement of the truth. But he was usually as long-suffering as he was tenacious. There was one member of the Commission on the French side whose conduct gave him constant encouragement and support. Every day brought fresh proof of the ability, moral courage, sincerity, and good faith of M. Rouher. These are Cobden's own words, and he adds with enthusiasm that his name will go down to posterity

1860.
ÆT. 56.

as the Huskisson or Peel of France. No ordinary man could have effected in a twelvemonth changes which in England were spread over twenty years.

The strain of the conflict and its preparation, both on Cobden and his colleagues, was very great. The discussions at the Foreign Office usually lasted from two until six o'clock, when they went to dine. Later in the evening came laborious interviews with commercial experts from England, who brought tables, returns, extracts from ledgers. Commercial friends at home were apt to be impatient, and Cobden was obliged to write long letters of encouragement and exhortation. In the morning, after two or three hours devoted to correspondence and further interviews, soon after eleven Cobden proceeded to the offices of the English commissioners in the Rue de l'Université, where his colleagues had already arranged the matter acquired in the previous evening. This they examined and discussed and prepared for the meeting at two o'clock, when the encounter was once more opened.

Occasional relief was enjoyed in varied social intercourse. There were great official banquets with Ministers of State, blazing with stars and decorations. There were the balls and receptions of the Ministers' wives, where Cobden ungallantly noted that the number of handsome toilettes was more striking than the beauty of their wearers. He was taken one day to see the studio of Ary Scheffer; and on another day he went with Clara Novello to visit Rossini at his villa at Passy. The composer's vivacity and cleverness pleased Cobden, and he was perhaps not displeased when the old man asked why the English were in a panic, and declared his indignation at such childishness in a great nation for whom he had all his life long felt the deepest

1860. Æt. 56.

respect. One night at the table of Arles-Dufour, Cobden met Enfantin, the head of the Saint Simonians, and the most wonderful and impressive figure in the history of modern enthusiasm. The party sat until midnight, talking over the question of a mutual limitation of the armaments of France and England, and all agreed that unless something were done to put a stop to this warlike rivalry, a conflict must inevitably break out. "*If you would preserve peace*," said Enfantin, amending the saying of the old world, "*then prepare for peace.*"

Cobden was more than once a guest at the house of the Marquis de Boissy, and the more famous Marquise, better known as the Countess Guiccioli. Cobden's simple mind was surprised at the fact that, so far from having lost caste by the notoriety of her relations with Lord Byron, the lady moved in the highest circles in Paris and was much sought after. The Marquis was a strong old Tory, vigorously opposed to Free Trade and every other reform; he predicted that the Emperor's concessions to England would be his ruin; confidently foretold a reign of terror for Italy, the death of Victor Emmanuel on the scaffold, and "many other equally pleasant and probable events." Cobden listened to all this nonsense with unruffled humour, as was his wont; few men have ever been better able to suffer fools gladly. Only once he nearly broke down, when at a fête given by an American of high position to celebrate the Fourth of July, the host made a speech to French and English guests in that singularly bad taste which American orators so often think due to the majesty of their country. Cobden was always a missionary. At a dinner where most of the guests happened to be eminent surgeons and physicians, he tried hard to enlist them against vivisection as

practised at the Veterinary College; "but I am afraid," he says, "that I did not meet with much success." He delighted in everything that extended his knowledge of men and cities. On the occasion of the Emperor's fête (Aug. 15), he walked about the streets all the evening, and observing that the great thoroughfares were closed against carriages, and kept clear for the exclusive use of pedestrians from seven until ten, he marks that "such consideration would not have been shown to the masses at the expense of the rich and luxurious classes in England." 1860. ÆT. 56.

There was one group with whom after a very short experience Cobden found it impossible to carry on any intercourse. "I have ceased to go among the Orleanist party," he told Mr. Bright; "they are hardly rational or civil." Whatever we may think of the Empire, there can only be one opinion of its Orleanist foes, that eyeless, impotent, shifty faction, who dreamed and dream on that kingdoms can be governed by literary style, and that the mighty agitations of a newly revolutionized society can be ruled by the petty combinations and infantile tactics of drawing-room intrigue.

A break in the tedium of his work, but perhaps a break of doubtful refreshment, is mentioned in a letter to his friend Mr. Hargreaves:—"For the last three days," he says, "I have been attending the debates in the Corps Législatif on the Treaty. The scene reminded me of our own old doings in the House of Commons twenty years ago. The Protectionists were very savage. Being recognized in the strangers' tribune, I became the object of attack and defence. It was really the old thing over again. As I was leaving the House in a shower of rain, one of the members, who avowed himself a Protectionist,

1860. Æt. 56.

offered me his umbrella, and he remarked, 'If we had been still under the constitutional régime, your Treaty would never have passed. Not twenty-five members of the Chamber would have been for it.'"[1]

Of one or two of the most important of Cobden's conversations, it is worth while to transcribe the reports from his own journal. On March 25 he met Count Persigny, who was then on one of his frequent visits from Albert Gate to Paris.

"He expressed himself," says Cobden, "in strong terms to me upon the subject of the present system of government in France; says the Emperor has no independent responsible Ministers; that he governs, himself, in the minutest details of administration; that he has been gradually more and more assuming to himself all the powers of the State; that for two years after the formation of the Imperial Government there were men in his Cabinet, such as Drouyn de l'Huys, St. Arnaud, and himself (Persigny), who exercised an independent judgment on his projects, and that he was then willing to yield to the advice and arguments of his council, but that latterly he had been accustomed to act upon his own impulse, or only to consult one of his Ministers; that his Cabinet frequently found decrees in the *Moniteur* of which they had never heard, and that this habit of secret and personal management opened the door to all kinds of intrigues, and gave the opportunity for unworthy individuals, male and female, to exercise an irresponsible and improper influence over the acts of the Emperor. He blamed M. Fould for having encouraged and flattered the Emperor into this habit of ruling by his personal will, independent of his Ministers, by which he was bringing great danger on his dynasty; that he had not the genius of the first

[1] *To William Hargreaves*, May 2, 1860.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

Napoleon, to whom his flatterers compared him, or his mastery of details; and that in attempting to interfere with everything, nothing was properly superintended. That he (Count de P.) was very unhappy at this state of things; that he had been for some years remonstrating against it; that he was now penning another memorial on the subject, a rough copy of which he had in his pocket; and that if he failed to effect the desired reform, he should retire from the service of the Emperor, and withdraw altogether from public life; that he was entitled to a salary of £1200 a year as senator, or to a pension of £4000 a year as privy councillor; that he should not accept either, but would gather together his small private fortune and retire upon that."

"*April* 26.—Called on M. Herbet, the Chairman of the French Commission for arranging the details of the Treaty. M. Herbet had been six years Consul at London. In the course of conversation he remarked good-humouredly upon the aristocratic manners of the English people. When he went first to London he was a junior attaché to the Embassy, and he was then a welcome guest at the tables of the great; but when he was appointed Consul-General, with important duties and 40,000 francs per annum, he was no longer *comme il faut*, and found himself hardly worthy to be the guest of our principal merchants.

"*May* 20.—Breakfasted with Emile de Girardin, and afterwards sat with him in his garden whilst he gave me the Bonaparte programme of foreign policy, which in brief amounted to this:—that France must extend her frontier to the Rhine, after which the Emperor could afford to grant political liberty to his people; that all Belgium, with the exception of Brussels and Antwerp, would willingly annex itself to

1860. Æt. 56.

France; that the German provinces to the left of the Rhine, though not speaking French, were Catholic and therefore inclined towards annexation, and might be bribed by a promise of an exemption from taxation for a number of years to become a portion of France; that Prussia might be indemnified by the absorption of the smaller German States, and Austria be pacified by a slice of Turkey; that after this extension of territory to the natural boundaries of France, the Bonaparte dynasty would be secured, and the Emperor would enter into an engagement for a complete system of disarmament; that in no other way can this dynasty be enabled to grant liberal institutions, and without these there can be no security for the peace of Europe; that the family of the King of Belgium might be compensated by a crown at Constantinople, et cetera. I laughed repeatedly at the *naiveté* with which he went over this unprincipled programme of foreign policy.

"*June* 8.—Called on Prince Napoleon, who in the course of conversation described the state of the relations between the Governments of England and France as being very unsatisfactory; '*les choses vont mal.*' He alluded to the danger of our constantly arming in England, the uneasiness which it gave to the people, and the tendency which it had by the burden of taxation that it laid on them, to reconcile the English to a war as the only means of getting rid of the evil. He complained of the vacillating conduct of our Government in its foreign relations; that it never seemed to know its own mind, which was constantly liable to be influenced by the state of opinion in England and by the majority of the House of Commons. He alluded to the question of the annexation of Savoy, and remarked that our Government knew that it was inevitable; that he had him-

1860.
ÆT. 56.

self told Lord Cowley that it was absolutely necessary for the satisfaction of the French people, who required some return for the sacrifices they had made for the independence of Italy. He spoke of our Tory party as being just as hostile to the Bonapartes as were their predecessors of the time of the first Empire; that some of the Whig party were of a similar character. He mentioned Lord Clarendon as being a 'thorough aristocrat,' who had told him that Bright and myself were a couple of fools who thought of converting England into a Republic.

"*June* 10.—In consequence of a letter which I received from Prince Napoleon's Secretary, I called at the Palais Royal to-day, and had a conversation with the Prince. He said that the political relations of the two countries were very far from being in a satisfactory state; that he feared the Austrians were going to interfere in Naples; that he suspected they were encouraged by the confidence they had in the support of our Court and the Prince Consort, and that the English Government would not join France in preventing it. The consequence might be that the Piedmontese would interfere also, and a war would be the consequence which would compel France to take a part, or else allow the Austrians to march to Turin, which they would certainly do if they had not a French army to oppose them; that England might avert this by undertaking with her fleet to prevent an expedition from leaving Trieste; that no bloodshed could arise; and that the least England could do would be to assist France in maintaining the principle of non-intervention. He dreaded the complications that would arise, and feared that it might lead to a rupture between France and England.

1860. ÆT. 56.

"He then said he was about to mention a delicate matter, and he suggested that I ought to be appointed Ambassador to France; that this would do more than anything besides to cement the good relations between the two countries. As this was said with a good deal of emphasis, and appeared to be the communication he had in view when he sent for me, I replied, with equal emphasis, 'Impossible! you really do not understand us in England!' I then explained exactly my position towards Lord Cowley; that I had from the first been only an interloper on his domain; that he had acted with great magnanimity in tolerating my intrusion; that a man of narrow mind would have resented it, and that I felt much indebted to him for his tolerance of me, et cetera. The Prince remarked that a man of first-rate capacity ought to have resented it, and either have given up his post altogether to me, or to have resisted my encroachment on his functions. I remarked that Lord Cowley had frankly owned that I had superior knowledge to himself on questions of a commercial or economical character, and that, considering how much they had been my study, it was not derogatory to him to grant me precedence in my own specialty. I begged him to say no more upon the subject.

"*June* 14.—To-day a fête-day at Paris, a holiday, a review, flags, and illuminations. The Emperor was well received by the populace on his way from the railway to the Tuileries, and in going and coming from the Champ de Mars, where he passed in review upwards of 50,000 troops and national guards. The occasion of these demonstrations was the celebration of the annexation of Savoy and Nice to France. An acquisition of

1860.
ÆT. 56.

more territory is as popular with the masses here and in the United States (and would be in England if we had anything but the sea for our frontier), as in ancient times it was with despots and conquerors. The world is governed by the force of traditions, after they have lost by the change of time and circumstances all relation to the existing state of human affairs. It is only by the greater diffusion of knowledge in the science of political economy, that men will cease to covet their neighbour's land, from the conviction that they may possess themselves of all that it produces by a much cheaper, as well as honester, process than by war and conquest. But until this time arrives, we do not insure ourselves against the conquering propensities of despotic sovereigns by transferring the supreme power to the masses of the people.

"*July* 16.—Called on Lord Cowley, and referring to a suggestion which he and M. Rouher had made that I should seek an audience with the Emperor, in order to strengthen his Free Trade tendencies by my conversation with him, I alluded to the warlike preparations which had lately been going on in England, and confessed a repugnance to meeting the Emperor, to whom I had promised last November that if he entered on the path of Free Trade without reserve, it would be accepted by the English people as a proof that he meditated a policy of peace. Yet in the midst of my labours upon the details of the French tariff, in which I had every day found greater proofs of the honest intentions of the French Government, I observed a constant increase in the military preparations in England, which completely falsified my promises to the Emperor. And now we were

1860. daily threatened with a proposal for a large outlay for fortifications. I added that, if the latter scheme were announced, I should feel disinclined again to see the Emperor."

ÆT. 56.

It was not long before the proposal was launched, and Cobden was perfectly prepared for it. The momentous subject of military expenditure had in truth divided Cobden's active interest with the Treaty since the beginning of the year. It had been incessantly in his mind, harassing and afflicting him. If he had been capable of faltering or despondency, it would have unnerved him for the difficult contest which he was every day waging. The financial arrangements connected with the Treaty itself, had not been carried through Parliament very smoothly. The episode of the Paper Duties in the House of Lords was a curious interruption to serious business. Lord John Russell had brought in a Reform Bill, but the Prime Minister was notoriously hostile to it, and the Parliament was thoroughly Palmerstonian at heart. It was a session of confusion and cross purposes. "The House of Commons is an uncertain sea," wrote one of the most competent observers to Cobden, "soon up with any shift of the wind. It got disorganized by the proposed Reform Bill. Members were determined not to pass it, yet they dared not commit themselves to a vote against it. Delay became the watchword, and nothing was passed lest the road should be cleared for the Reform Bill. Every day the House fell deeper into disorganization, and it seemed unable to recover its balance."

In the spring and summer, the feeling in England against France had become more and more deeply coloured with suspicion and alarm. It had

1860.
ÆT. 56.

approached what an eminent correspondent of Cobden's called a "maniacal alarm." There was in this country, he was told, "such a resolute and one-sided determination to throw all responsibility on our neighbours, to presume the worst, to construe everything in that sense, to take credit for perfect blamelessness, as mere argument cannot surmount." It was observed by one who was himself a churchman, that among the most active promoters of the panic and the necessity for immediate preparation were the country clergy. A famous bishop went about telling a story of a Frenchman who had told him that he knew the Emperor's mind to be quite undecided whether to work with England for liberty, or to work against England for absolutism, beginning the work with an invasion. The annexation of Savoy had kindled a fire in England which a breath of air might blow into a conflagration.

The experts in foreign politics surpassed themselves in the elaborateness of their ignorance. One peer who had actually been Minister for Foreign Affairs, gravely argued that if the annexation of Savoy should take place, the formation of a strong kingdom in the north of Italy would not be feasible, as that kingdom would be open at both extremities, by the Alps to France, and by the Mincio to Austria. The newspapers and debates teemed with foolish jargon of this kind. It is like a return to the light of day to come upon that short but most pithy speech (March 2, 1860), in which the orator said that he did not want the Government to give the slightest countenance to the project of annexation, but, he exclaimed in a memorable phrase, "Perish Savoy —though Savoy will not perish and will not suffer— rather than the Government of England should be

1860. ÆT. 56. involved in enmity with the Government and people of France in a matter in which we have no concern whatever."

Unfortunately, Ministers shared the common panic. Lord Palmerston had, until the winter of 1859, been the partisan of the French Empire. He had been so ready to recognize it, that his haste involved him in a quarrel with his colleagues and the Court. He was the Minister of that generation who, more than any other, had shown penetration and courage enough firmly to withstand the Germanism which Prince Albert, in natural accordance with his education and earliest sympathies, had brought into the palace. He had come into power in 1859, mainly because the people expected him to stand by the Emperor in the emancipation of Italy. But in the winter of 1859 he wrote a letter to Lord John Russell, then the Foreign Secretary, saying that though until lately he had strong confidence in the fair intentions of the Emperor towards England, yet he now began to suspect that the intention of avenging Waterloo had only lain dormant. "You may rely upon it," he said to the Duke of Somerset, "that at the bottom of his heart there rankles a deep and inextinguishable desire to humble and punish England."[1] Later than this, at the beginning of 1860, it is true that he admitted that although the Emperor differed from us about certain conditions, and the interpretation of certain conditions of the treaty of peace with Russia, yet the points in dispute were settled substantially in conformity with our views. "There is no ground," he said, "for imputing to him bad faith in his conduct towards us as allies." Notwithstanding this, the imputation of bad faith as a future possibility lay

[1] Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*.

1860.
ÆT. 56

persistently in men's minds. Lord Palmerston's apprehensions were shared by all the other members of his Government, save two; they were echoed in the reverberations of ten thousand leading articles; and they were eagerly seized by a public which seems to be never so happy as when it is conjuring up dangers in which it only half believes.

Lord John Russell wrote a characteristic note to Cobden (July 3), announcing a formal notification of an article which prolonged the labours of the commission until November 1. "I hope," Lord John Russell proceeds, "that long before that time arrives, you will have completed your glorious work, and laid the foundations of such an intertwining of relations between England and France that it will not be easy to separate them. It is curious and amusing to me, who remember how Huskisson was run down for proposing a duty on silk goods so low as 30 per cent, to hear the Protectionists abuse France for not having a much lower duty. My belief is that 15 per cent will protect their chief manufactures. In the meantime I wish to see this tight little island made almost impregnable. It is the sole seat of freedom in Europe which can resist a powerful despot, and I am for 'civil and religious liberty all over the world.'"

There was one powerful man in the Cabinet who did his best to stem the dangerous tide. But though in the session of 1860 Mr. Gladstone had delighted the House and the country by the eloquence and the mastery of his Budget Speech of February, and by the consummate skill with which he conducted his case in the debates that followed, yet he was a long way from the commanding eminence at which he arrived afterwards when Lord Palmerston's place in the popular imagination became empty. If he had

1860. ÆT. 56.

left Lord Palmerston's Government, the effect would perhaps hardly have been greater than it was when he left the Government of Sir Robert Peel in 1845, or that of Lord Palmerston himself in 1855. But the struggle in the forum of his own conscience was long and severe. He felt all the weakness of the evidence by which his colleagues justified the urgency of their suspicions and the necessity for preparation. He revolted from the frank irrationality of the common panic-monger of the street and the newspaper. As a thrifty steward he groaned over the foolish profusion with which he saw his masters flinging money out of the window. He was in very frequent correspondence with Cobden, and Cobden brought to bear upon him all his powers of persuasion, supported by a strong and accurate knowledge of all that the French Government had to show in defence of their own innocence. It is hardly too much to say that Cobden at this time subjected Mr. Gladstone to the same intense intellectual and moral pressure to which he had subjected Peel fifteen years before. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the spirit of Lord Palmerston's appeal to Cobden himself to come within the citadel, decided that he could do more good by remaining in the Government than by leaving it. At the close of the session, marked as it had been by more dazzling proofs than his career had ever furnished before of eloquence and intellectual power, his position in Parliament and the country was certainly weaker than it had been six months ago.

Cobden at least was no harsh judge. At the beginning of the year, when writing to Mr. Bright about the Treaty, he had said, "I have told you before that Gladstone has shown much heart in this business. . . . He has a strong aversion to the

1860.
ÆT. 56.

waste of money on our armaments. He has no class feeling about the Services. He has much more of our sympathies. It is a pity you cannot avoid hurting his convictions by such sallies as [—sally not now worth reproducing]. . . . He has more in common with you and me than any other man of his power in Britain." And later in the year, "I agree with you that Gladstone overworks himself. But I suspect that he has a conscience which is at times a troublesome partner for a Cabinet Minister. I make allowances for him, for I have never yet been able to define to my own satisfaction how far a man with a view to utility ought to allow himself to be merged in a body of men called a Government, or how far he should preserve his individuality. If he goes into a Government at all, he must make up his mind sometimes to compromise with his own convictions for a time, and at all events to be overborne by a majority of his colleagues."

Meanwhile, the Government insisted on what they regarded as the policy of security. On July 10, Cobden wrote to Lord Palmerston a long letter, calmly and earnestly urging reasons against a new scheme of defensive armaments. He began with a few words about the Treaty, and the date at which they might expect to end their labours. The Treaty, he said, had been the engrossing task of the French Government for the last eight months, and M. Rouher was then foregoing his autumn holidays in order to complete the work. Cobden then goes on:—

"The systematic and resolute manner in which these reforms have been entered upon leave me no reason to doubt that the Government contemplate a complete revolution in their economical policy, which will lead to an early and large increase in the commercial intercourse of the two countries, and to an

1860. Æt. 56.

amelioration of their social and political relations. Now it is evident that this is a very different prospect from that which is generally entertained in England, where the public mind has been systematically misled, apparently with the design of effecting some temporary and sinister object. The extraordinary military and warlike displays of the last few months in England have also tended to diminish the hopes which were at first entertained in connexion with the Treaty. And this state of discouragement in the public mind has been increased by the rumour that it is the intention of the Government to propose a large increase to our permanent defences. For as this will be to commit ourselves to a future and somewhat remote expenditure, rather than to provide against a present danger, it would be tantamount to a declaration on the part of the Government that they have no faith in any ultimate advantages from the Treaty.

"It is on this point that I am more immediately led to address you. It seems to me that the two questions are intimately connected; and I venture to suggest that in fairness to the public and to Parliament, as well as to the Government itself, the result of our negotiations here should be known, before the country is pledged to a further large outlay for defensive armaments. Let it be understood that I ask merely for the delay of a few months; and I ask this on the ground that there is not only a general ignorance in England as to what the value of the Treaty is likely to be (for it cannot be known even to myself until the French tariff is ready for publication), but that a widespread suspicion has been created that the French Government is playing an uncandid part in the negotiations. Should the Treaty prove as unsatisfactory in its details as is

predicted by those who are urging us to an increase of our warlike preparations, I shall have nothing to say in opposition to such a policy. But if, as I expect, the French Government should take but a single step from their prohibition system to a tariff more liberal than that of the Zollverein or the United States, then I think the public mind in England will undergo a considerable change as to the prospects of peace with our great neighbour; and it is doubtful whether the country would, on the very eve of such a change, subject itself to increased burdens in anticipation of a rupture with its new customer. All I desire is that it should be allowed a choice when in possession of a full knowledge of these circumstances.

1860. ÆT. 56.

"There is another reason why I am induced to press this subject on your attention. It has been evident to me from the first that political considerations entered more largely than those of an economical kind into the motives which induced the Emperor to embark at this time on the career of commercial reform. Doubtless he was satisfied that this new policy would be ultimately advantageous to his people; but there was no necessity for immediate action, and, considering the great derangement of powerful interests, and the large amount of opposition and unpopularity involved in the change, there was nothing which invited one even so bold as himself to enter prematurely upon the task. His immediate objects were to strengthen the friendly relations of the French and English peoples, and to give the world an assurance that he did not contemplate a career of war and conquest. And I did not hesitate to assure him and his most influential advisers that nothing would be so cordially accepted by the English people, as a proof of his pacific intentions

1860. towards them, as the adoption without reserve of a liberal commercial policy.

ÆT. 56.

"It will be readily perceived that if, in addition to all that has been done, the Government should announce a great scheme of defensive armaments, and thus before my labours are completed, discredit by anticipation the political value of the Treaty, it will considerably weaken my position here. Bear in mind that the duties are not yet finally settled on any of the articles of the French tariff, every item of which has to be discussed and arranged by the plenipotentiaries, between the extreme rates of five and twenty per cent. I do not allege that the French Government will be led by the hostile bearing of England to adopt a system of retaliation in the terms of the Treaty. But in the important discussions on the details of the French tariff (and it is wholly a question of details), I shall be placed in a very disadvantageous position, and shall find myself deprived of those arguments with which I most successfully urged the adoption of the Free Trade policy, if in the meantime the present Government commits itself, and, what is still more important in the sight of France, if it be allowed to commit the Free Trade and popular party in England, to a permanent attitude of hostility and mistrust."

The answer to this weighty remonstrance was forthcoming a week after Cobden wrote it, and it came through the House of Commons. On July 23, Lord Palmerston made his speech. He introduced a resolution for constructing works for the defence of certain royal dockyards and arsenals, Dover and Portland, and for erecting a central arsenal. After speaking in general language of the horizon being darkened by clouds that betokened the possibility of a tempest, Lord Palmerston proceeded: — "The

Committee of course knows that in the main I am speaking of our immediate neighbours across the Channel, and there is no use in disguising it. It is in no unfriendly spirit that I am speaking. No one has any right to take offence at considerations and reflections which are purely founded upon the principles of self-defence." He admitted that he hoped much from the Treaty, but a treaty was a frail defence. It would be folly to rely on its future effects, so long as our sea frontier was vulnerable. There were, moreover, circumstances in the state of Europe leading us to think that we might soon have to defend ourselves from attack. France had an army of 600,000; of these 400,000 were actually under arms, and the remainder could be called into the ranks in a fortnight. He did not mean to say that such a host was raised for the deliberate purpose of aggression, but still the possession of power to aggress frequently inspires the will to aggress. It was not only the army that suggested these apprehensions. The navy, too, had been greatly strengthened, so that our neighbours would have the means of transporting within a very few hours a large and formidable body of troops to our shores.

1860. ÆT. 56.

Cobden's plea in reply to all this had been given by anticipation, in a postscript to the letter from which I have already quoted. "I am of course writing," he had said, "with the conviction that France has done nothing in the way of warlike preparations to justify our demonstrations in England. I have had good opportunities of satisfying myself that the most monstrous exaggerations have been current in England respecting the naval strength of this country." And this was quite true. Cobden had taken as much trouble as the responsible head of a department, or much more perhaps, to find out

1860. ÆT. 56.

from visits to Nantes and elsewhere, as well as from constant conversations with the French authorities and the English naval attaché, whether any real change in the proportion between the imperial navy and our own was taking place. He had satisfied himself that there was no evidence whatever of the alleged change.

Lord Palmerston seems to have handed Cobden's letter to Lord John Russell, who wrote in reply :—

"*July* 31, 1860.

"My dear Mr. Cobden—I infer from your last letter that you think the plan for fortifications will interfere with the arrangements of the Commercial Treaty. I cannot understand this. The Emperor wishes to defend France ; he completes Cherbourg ; he adopts a peace army of 600,000 men. Not a word of complaint. We add to our navy, and propose to fortify the arsenals where they are built and repaired. We are accused immediately of warlike intentions. Is it to be deliberately said that France may be armed, but that we should be unarmed? Belgium, Antwerp, Dover, Portsmouth, would in that case soon fall into French possession.

"I am anxious for the completion of the Commercial Treaty. But I cannot consent to place my country at the mercy of France.—I remain, yours very truly,

"J. Russell."

To this Cobden replied (Aug. 2, 1860) with an emphatic statement, which he often repeated in various forms, but which those who accuse him of wishing for peace at any price carefully overlook :—

"My dear Lord John Russell—So far am I from wishing that 'we should be unarmed,' and so

1860.
ÆT. 56.

little am I disposed to 'place my country at the mercy of France' (to quote the language of your note), that *I would, if necessary, spend one hundred millions sterling to maintain an irresistible superiority over France at sea.* I had satisfied myself that we were in this position of security, and that there was no foundation for the reports of the sudden or unusual increase of the French navy before I addressed my letter to Lord Palmerston. . . . Recollect that we had voted for our armaments for this year nearly £30,000,000, before the fortification plan was proposed. I do not see any limit to the future expenditure if, when a further increase is objected to, every existing provision is to be ignored, and we are met with the answer that, unless the additional outlay be agreed to, we shall be unarmed."

On the same day on which Cobden wrote in this way, Mr. Bright, in a speech of the highest power and sagacity, had shown equally clearly that it was not the policy of security which he opposed, but the mistaken means of carrying it out. After illustrating the almost daily advances that were taking place in the engines of war, Mr. Bright said:—"I am one of those who believe that at a time like this, when these remarkable changes are taking place, . . . the course of an honest and economic Government should be to go on slowly, cautiously, and inquiringly, and not commit themselves to a vast expenditure which twelve months' experience may show to be of no value at all."

If it was answered that the occasion was urgent, then Cobden's rejoinder by anticipation in his letter to Lord Palmerston was perfectly good, namely, that the expenditure on fortifications was remote and spread over a number of years, and therefore could

1860. hardly be designed to meet an immediate and pressing danger. Lord Palmerston's speech we now see, at the distance of a score of years, to have been a dangerous provocation to Napoleon instantly to make the very descent for which we declared ourselves to be unprepared. If Napoleon had really cherished the bitter design of avenging Waterloo, of which Lord Palmerston suspected him, he would not have waited for the completion of the fortifications. The effect in Paris was what Cobden had foreseen, as the entries in his journals testify.

Æt. 56.

"*July* 25.—Called on Lord Cowley, and in the course of conversation expressed my disapproval of Lord Palmerston's project for fortifying the British coasts at the expense of ten or twelve millions sterling. I also censured the tone of his speech in alluding to France as the probable aggressor upon England. The scheme and the speech were a mockery and insult to me, whilst engaged in framing the Treaty of Commerce ; and I frankly avowed that if I had not my heart in the business in which I was engaged here, I would return home and do the utmost in my power to destroy the Ministry, and thus prevent it from committing the popular party to the policy of the present Government. He admitted that Lord Palmerston's speech was injudicious in having alluded so exclusively to the danger to be apprehended from France.

"*July* 26.—Lord Palmerston's speech in the House of Commons has produced considerable emotion in the political circles of Paris. The proposal to spend nine millions on fortifications has occasioned less offence than the speech which accompanied it, wherein he directed the apprehensions of the country towards France exclusively as the source of our danger of attack and invasion.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

People speak of it as an indication that our Court and aristocracy are inclined to renew the policy of 1792, by forming another coalition in opposition to France. They say that the inspiration of our policy in arming and fortifying comes from Berlin and Brussels through the British Court.

"*July* 28.—Dined with Mr. P—— and a party at the restaurant of Philippe. M. Chevalier, one of the company, told me a curious story about a recent interview between M. Thouvenel, the French Foreign Minister, and Lord Cowley. The latter, after confessing some perplexity in making the communication, informed the former that Lord Palmerston had obtained from some person in the secret a copy of the plan of the Emperor for seizing on London! He had also procured from a similar source the information that the Emperor had entered into an arrangement with Cavour, by which France was to secure a further aggrandizement of territory. Both stories were received as laughably untrue. M. Chevalier says there are *chevaliers d'industrie* who manufacture these marvellous stories, and sell them to newspapers or to credulous statesmen. Both the above *canards* had, he said, been sold to Lord Palmerston, and by him been transferred to his colleagues of the Cabinet.

"*August* 2.—In a conversation with M. Rouher, the Minister of Commerce, he related to me the incident, mentioned previously by M. Chevalier, of Lord Cowley having called on M. Thouvenel, the Foreign Minister, to ask for an explanation respecting a secret treaty alleged to have been entered into by France and Sardinia, by which the latter was to be allowed to annex the whole of the Italian States on the condition of ceding to the French Emperor another slice of territory. He described in a graphic

1860. ÆT. 56.

way the embarrassment of the British envoy in disclosing the delicate object of his visit; how, after many shrugs and wry faces, and sundry exhortations from the French Minister, he at last revealed the secret; how this was followed by an earnest disavowal, on the personal honour of M. Thouvenel, upon which, after many fresh protestations of regret and perplexity, Lord Cowley produced from his pocket a copy of the Treaty, which he handed to the French Minister, who thereupon laughed heartily, and assured him that it was not worth the paper on which it was written, and that in fact the English Government had been the victim of a very clumsy hoax.

"M. Rouher spoke in indignant terms of the speech lately delivered by Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons when introducing the measure for fortifying the naval arsenals, in which he founded his scheme entirely upon the danger to be apprehended from France. He characterized the policy of our Cabinet as a pitiful truckling to the popular passions of the moment, for the sole object of securing a majority in Parliament, in disregard of the interests of commerce and civilization and the higher duties of statesmanship. He spoke at some length and with much eloquence on this subject, and remarked that he regretted there was not a tribune in France from which he could speak for half an hour in answer to Lord Palmerston. He said that this speech had increased the difficulties of the French Government in carrying out liberally the terms of the Treaty, for it deprived them of the argument that it would ameliorate the moral and political relations of the two countries. He denied the truth of Lord Palmerston's assertion that the French navy had been unduly increased. Alluding to the letter which the Emperor had written to Count Persigny in consequence of

1860.
ÆT. 56.

Lord Palmerston's speech, he remarked that it had wounded the susceptibilities of the French people, who dislike to see their sovereign treat with so much consideration, and so much on the footing of equality, a statesman who had recently offered so many insults to France. I hear from many other quarters that the Emperor's letter has hurt the self-love of all classes of the French people. It is a significant fact that it has not been published in the *Moniteur*.

"*August* 27.—Called on M. Rouher in the morning and had some conversation on the subject of our proposed arrangements for completing the French tariff. He mentioned that he had been speaking to Lord Clarendon upon the language used by Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons, and had censured the levity with which he had for mere momentary objects in the House embittered the relations of the two countries and endangered their peace. He observed that the conduct of Lord Palmerston had added immensely to the difficulties of the French Government in carrying out the details of the Treaty, for it had cut from under their feet the political grounds on which they had justified themselves to the influential members of the Protectionist party, who now taunted him with having failed to secure the English alliance by the Free Trade concessions. He said that the Emperor's letter to M. Persigny was not intended for publication, but that the Emperor was importuned by the latter to allow it to be given to the world.

"*August* 31.—Called on Prince Napoleon, who informed me he was going shortly on a visit to England, where he would study our agriculture, and travel into Scotland as far as Inverness. I hoped he would visit Manchester and Liverpool, and make a speech on the Commercial Treaty. He complained

1860. ÆT. 56.

of the language of Lord Palmerston in the House towards France, and intimated that it would be well for the peace of the world that he were removed from the political stage, if not from the stage of life. He said the great danger to be dreaded from these attacks upon France, made by our leading statesmen from political motives, was lest the Germans, and particularly Austria, should infer that they would be supported in a war with France by England, and thus be encouraged to make a rupture with this country. He attributed our present hostile attitude towards France to the influence exercised at our Court by the royal families of Prussia, Belgium, etc. The English Court, he said, in the present equally balanced state of parties, exercised a great sway over the rival aristocratic candidates for office.

"*September* 4.—Lord Granville called, and I took the opportunity of commenting on the conduct of the Government during the late session of Parliament, particularly with regard to Lord Palmerston's gratuitous attacks on France in his speech on proposing the project of fortifications. I showed the enormous superiority which we already possessed at sea before the expenditure on coast defences was proposed, that we had 84,000 men and boys voted for our navy against 30,000 in France; that our expenditure was £15,000,000 and theirs £6,000,000.

"*September* 5.—M. de Persigny (French Ambassador to London) dined with me, and we had a long conversation upon the politics of the two countries. I referred to the report that the Emperor had ordered eight more *frégates blindées* to be built, which he seemed to admit to be true, and I expressed an opinion that it would only lead to our building double as many iron-cased line-of-battle ships in England. I added that this could only lead to an indefinite

1860.
Æt. 56.

expense on both sides, and that unless an end could be put to this insane rivalry it would lead to a war. I said I blamed the French Government for taking the initiative in these matters, which he did not appear able to meet. He agreed that it would be necessary to endeavour to bring the two Governments to an understanding by which some limit could be put to this warlike rivalry. He expressed an opinion that it would be left to a Tory Government to carry out this policy. He complained of the levity with which Lord Palmerston trifled with the peace of the two countries; and he spoke of the difficulties which he encountered in his relations with our Government, owing to the want of a consistent and reliable policy on the part of the Ministry, who altered their course to suit the caprice of the House of Commons from day to day."

Meanwhile, the fabric of a tariff was slowly rising out of space. In September, a storm ruffled the surface of Cobden's diplomacy. The new rates of duty on iron and other metal wares in the French tariff were to come into operation on the 1st of October. Cobden had been holding daily conferences with M. Rouher for settling the necessary alterations in the tariff, and was at length (Sept. 10) able to report that the work was nearly completed. Lord Cowley expressed a wish to take instructions from home before he signed the convention. In vain Cobden pointed out to him the impossibility of revising the French tariff in London without the assistance of the French Ministers, and the Ministers would certainly not go over the matter again. At that moment, moreover, the heads of departments were absent from London, and a most embarrassing and dangerous delay would necessarily take place in consequence. Lord Cowley did not feel that he

1860. could give way, and a copy of the tariff was sent home. When the tariff reached London, the Foreign Office hesitated to accept the figures without reference in detail to the Treasury, the Customs, and the Board of Trade. It was true that both the Board of Trade and the Customs had sent their representatives to supervise the proceedings in Paris. It was clearly explained to the Foreign Office how impossible it would be to revise a French tariff in London. The President of the Board of Trade was away in his yacht, and nobody knew where to find him. In the meanwhile his department had written to the Foreign Office, deprecating as useless, if not mischievous, any attempt to revise the French tariff in London, and advising that it should be accepted as it left the hands of the Commission in Paris. "The Board of Trade," said one of its Presidents, "is merely an opinion-giving department, and our advice is often disregarded, *especially when it is right*." It was disregarded now, and the tariff remained hung up in the most stubborn of all the Circumlocution offices. The first day of October was rapidly approaching. The French Ministers were astonished at a delay which was unintelligible. "I am amazed," M. Rouher said to Cobden, "that a country like England should allow a great commercial question to be treated in this contemptuous way. Had it been Caraccas or Guayaquil or Turkey, I should have understood it. But here is a Treaty of Commerce between England and a nation of thirty-six millions of people within two hours of its shores—probably the greatest event in her commercial annals—and it does not seem to create sufficient interest in the Government to induce the President of the Board of Trade to remain for a few days at his post, or even to leave his address where a despatch will find him." He added that he

Æt. 56.

had some reason to believe that perhaps there would be no great regret in some quarters, if Cobden did not meet with too great success in his negotiations. Success might procure for him a degree of influence that might, it was feared, possibly be used against the Government. 1860. ÆT. 56.

Cobden suggested to M. Rouher that if they could only sign such a portion of the tariff as was to come into operation on the 1st of October, they might at least publish the whole tariff, on the ground that the first portion was likely to be the least satisfactory to the English manufacturers, and it was unadvisable therefore to expose it to hostile criticism for a week or ten days before the rest could be published. When this was explained at the next meeting of the plenipotentiaries, a rather disagreeable scene took place. "Lord Cowley," says Cobden, "jumped up from his chair and, seizing his hat, declared with considerable excitement that he would leave the room, throw up all responsibility, and leave the matter in my hands; that I had undertaken to act without his consent, and in opposition to his instructions, et cetera. In vain M. Rouher explained that he had acted on my personal assurance, and that what I had said did not bind me as a plenipotentiary, and still less Lord Cowley. The whole scene ended in Lord Cowley refusing to sign the whole of the tariff on metals, and so we appended our signatures only to that portion which comes into operation on October 1." This, it should be said here, was the only occasion when any difference arose between Cobden and the English ambassador. "Do not say a word," he had written to Mr. Bright a few weeks before, "to disparage Lord Cowley. He has acted a very manly part, and has done his best to help me."

The continued delay as to the text of the Con-

1860. Æt. 56

vention chafed Cobden almost beyond endurance. "When the post of plenipotentiary was conferred on me, without my solicitation," he writes in his diary, "I little thought that it would subject me to feelings of humiliation. Yet this has been the case during the last week; for I find that I am paraded at meetings of the plenipotentiaries with my hands tied, without the power of solving the merest question of detail. When I filled the post of commercial traveller at the age of twenty, I was entrusted with more discretionary power than is now shared by Lord Cowley and myself while filling the office of H.M.'s plenipotentiaries. The name might more appropriately be changed to that of nullipotentiary. The points on which this delay is created by the Foreign Office are so trivial and unimportant as almost to defy comprehension. It fairly raises the suspicion whether there be not an occult influence at work at home, unfavourable to my success, and which would not grieve even if I were to fail in my Treaty altogether, or to abandon the undertaking in weariness and disgust."

The suspicion that his labours were not popular with the Cabinet was undoubtedly well founded, but in this particular instance Cobden was probably only suffering from that jealous and surly spirit which the Foreign Office thinks businesslike. Lord Cowley wrote to him good-naturedly:—"You will not bless the day when you made acquaintance with diplomacy. But as you have now got entangled in our meshes, you must take us as we are, for better, for worse." The truth seems to be that Lord Palmerston, who knew little or nothing of the merits of the matter, thought in a general way that official form or the national dignity required that a certain number of objections should be raised. Mr. Milner Gibson was compelled to hurry down to Broadlands, to prove

1860. ÆT. 56.

by word of mouth to the Prime Minister that they were wasting time in mere strawsplitting. The Foreign Office held out upon the following point. If an importer were proved to have made a declaration of value to the amount of ten per cent under the real value, he should be liable to penalties. No, our Government said, ten per cent is not margin enough: the importer must not be punished unless his under-declaration should amount to fifteen per cent on the real value. In fact, this was only making things a little easier for dishonest men. M. Rouher said that he would accept the alteration if it were pressed, but that it would disincline him for the adoption of further *ad valorem* duties. This was explained to Lord Cowley, and after an interchange of telegrams, the alteration was abandoned.

It was October 12 before the first supplementary convention was signed, fixing the duty on work in metals. The second supplementary convention, embracing the remainder of the French tariff, was signed on November 16. On this day the labours of the Treaty came to an end. Cobden summed up his grievances in the following passage in his journal, referring immediately to the earlier of the two conventions, but substantially conveying his impressions of the performance as a whole:—

"This convention was ready for signature, so far as the negotiation *here* was concerned, on the 18th September, and the delay which has taken place is attributable to our Foreign Office, to their habitual procrastination, the desire to meddle, and I fear also to the willingness on the part of some of the officials in that department to find fault with *my* performance. My position is that of a poacher, and their feeling towards me is akin to that of gamekeepers towards a trespasser in quest of game. I

1860. Æt. 56.

am afraid, too, that the majority of the Cabinet is not very eager for my complete success here. The tone of our Court is very hostile to the French Emperor, and in the present nearly-balanced state of political parties the Court has great influence. There is an instinctive feeling on the part of our aristocratic politicians that if the Treaty should prove successful, and result in a largely increased trade between France and England, it would produce a state of feeling which might lead to a mutual limitation of armaments, and thus cut down the expenditure for our warlike services on which our aristocratic system flourishes. The first attempt at delaying the Treaty, and perhaps detracting from my merit in its preparation, was the proposal to revise again the tariff in England; and when I had proved the absurdity and impossibility of doing this, and had induced them to leave it precisely as I had sent it home, then the Foreign Office officials fell upon the *text* of the convention, and by insisting on certain alterations produced a further delay. The attempt to substitute fifteen for ten per cent for the amount of undervaluation which should subject importers to a fine, and other attempted changes in this part of the convention, whilst they caused a further postponement, were calculated to weaken my influence with the French Minister by revoking an engagement to which I had become a party. These points have at last been most unwillingly yielded, after occasioning me great trouble and annoyance. The clause which I had agreed to for regulating the duty on sugar was rejected, though it was proposed merely for the convenience of the French Minister in controlling his own producers, and could not possibly be prejudicial to our interests. The clause also respecting the Visa of French Consuls

in England was altered at the Foreign Office, with no other practical result than to give needless offence to the French negotiators, and M. Herbet, one of the Commissioners, pronounced it to be very '*blessant*.' Altogether the spirit which animates the officials at home is very hostile and mistrustful to the French Government; and it is evident that, whilst this spirit lasts, it is quite impossible that any negotiation between the two Governments, with a view to limit their respective armaments, can be entered on with any chance of success."

1860. ÆT. 56.

In November Mr. Bright came to Paris to pay his friend a short visit. "I cannot allow you to leave Paris," he had written, "to go south to Algiers, or Egypt, or even to Cannes or Nice, without trying to have an evening or two with you." The day after his arrival they called on Prince Napoleon, who told them that the English Government ought to invite the Emperor to bring away his troops from Rome. According to Prince Napoleon, England could not do the French Government a greater service. On the following day they saw the Emperor himself.

"*Nov.* 27.—Mr. Bright and I had an audience of the Emperor. He asked if I was satisfied with the Treaty, and I replied that, with the exception of the article of iron, I did not complain. I told him that if iron had been taken last instead of the first item in the tariff, it would have been dealt with more boldly. He intimated that greater reductions would follow. He expressed to Mr. Bright his high sense of the course he had taken in always trying to preserve a good understanding between the two countries. He again complained (as he had done before to me) that his intentions towards England were misrepre-

1860. ÆT. 56. sented by certain people. He laughed at the reports that he was preparing some boats for the invasion of England, when it turned out they were intended to carry coals from the interior to Brest. He alluded to the conduct of an English lady, and said he had a letter written by her to M——, saying, 'Will nobody be found to shoot that rascal?' meaning the Emperor. He alluded to the affairs of Italy, and seemed to be especially puzzled what to do with the Pope. In reference to Venetia, he said he had suggested to Mr. —— that a pamphlet should be written recommending that Austria should sell the independence of that Italian province for a sum of money. In the course of our conversation he mentioned as a secret that he had bought the *Chronicle* London newspaper, and he offered to put it into Bright's and my hands, to be under our control.[1] I parried this proposal by saying that such arrangements could never be kept secret, and I rather surprised him by saying that I had heard some months since of his having bought that newspaper."

This interview had been sought by the Emperor's visitors from no idle motives. Most of the hour was taken up with the subject of passports. The two Englishmen had come there to bring arguments to bear which should induce the Emperor to abolish this troublesome restraint on the intercourse of nations. It naturally followed as a part of the policy on which France had entered in the Treaty; and the Emperor felt that the persuasion of his visitors could not be logically resisted. This proved to be another in-

[1] Mr. Bright does not recollect that the Emperor said he had bought the *Chronicle*, but that he had secured an influence in it or over it.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

stance of the value of the informal diplomacy of reasonable and enlightened men. Mr. Bright was struck by the great confidence which Napoleon seemed to feel in Cobden, and by the degree in which his mind was open to argument. After Mr. Bright returned to England, Cobden persevered with the good work.

"*December* 6.—Dined at M. Chevalier's. Met Count de Persigny, who has just returned from the Embassy to England and entered on the duties of Home Minister. We spoke upon the subject of passports. I mentioned to him the conversation I had had with the Emperor when Mr. Bright and I had an audience with him. He (Count P.) seemed inclined to put an end to the present system of passports between France and England, and to substitute a mere visiting card, which should receive the stamp from the consular agent at the port of embarkation, and which should serve as a ticket of admission into France. Although admitting that this would be an improvement on the present system, I advised him to make a clean sweep of all travelling permits, and to content himself with a police surveillance when a person became settled; I said that a *billet de séjour* might be required to be taken out by all Englishmen who took up their abode in any part of France."

Two days later Cobden wrote a letter to Persigny, now become Minister of the Interior, urging many reasons why he ought to abolish passports without substituting any other precaution in their place. The abolition of passports with regard to British subjects was passed a week later (December 16). Some of the English newspapers chose to say that the change had been made at the inter-

1860. Æt. 56.

cession of the Empress, who was delighted at the manner in which she had been treated in England. "The passport reform," Cobden wrote to Mr. Bright, "is capital. To-day, Chevalier writes to say that the French postmaster is prepared to increase the weight of letters, and I am writing by this post to Rowland Hill to say that he has only to make the proposal. Thus in the same year we have the tariff, abolition of passports, and a postal facility. The question arises naturally, why should not our Foreign Office accomplish some good of this kind? I do not want to throw any blame on Lord Cowley, but can it be doubted that much more of the same kind might be done if there was a will?"

This letter to Persigny was Cobden's last act before leaving Paris. On the 9th of December, accompanied by his wife and eldest daughter, he left Paris on his way to Algiers. He had never quite shaken off the effects of the illness which had attacked him in the previous winter. He used to say of himself that he was wholly the creature of atmosphere and temperature. His throat was constantly troublesome, and when cold and damp weather came, his hoarseness returned with growing severity. He had a nervous dread of the London fog, from which he had suffered the autumn before, and from which he was suffering even now, and he had an irresistible craving for the sunshine of the warm South. His doctor warned him that a single speech to a large audience might destroy his voice for ever; and he was beset with invitations to public meetings and congratulatory banquets. We cannot wonder at his eagerness for rest. "When I began last winter," he wrote to a friend, "as a volunteer in

1861.
ÆT. 57.

the corps of diplomacy, I little dreamed what a year's work I was preparing for myself. Certainly mine has not been an idle life, but I never had so tough a task in hand as that which I have just finished. And much as my heart was in the work, I feel intensely satisfied that it is at an end. Nor do I think, if I must confess so much, that I could again go through the ordeal. It would not be easy to explain to you what it has been, but if I should again have the pleasure of toasting my knees by your fire, I could explain it in a few sittings."[1]

He remained in Algiers until the following May. While he was absent, his friends began to talk about some public recognition of his services by the Government. The tariff had been received with almost universal approval in the various centres of English industry. Manchester, after a day or two of hesitation, pronounced at last a decided verdict. In spite of some difficulty about drills, the linen-men of Belfast were well pleased. The slate people and the leather people frankly declared that the new duties were all that they could desire. Bradford and Leeds, Nottingham and Leicester, rose to enthusiasm. The London newspapers, it is true, were nearly all silent, but the great merchants and manufacturers all over the country were thoroughly awake to the volume of wealth which the Treaty would pour into Great Britain. They asked one another whether, while grants of money were always lavished on men who achieved successes in war, the Government could leave unnoticed a man who had just achieved so vast a success in the field of industry and peace. As a matter of fact, the authorities of the Foreign

[1] *To William Hargreaves*, Nov. 16, 1860.

1861. Æt. 57. Office, it is said, did not even pass the account of the mere expenses of the Commission, a sum of little more than £3000 in all, without much ungracious demur. There was a rumour that a vote of money to Cobden would be submitted to the House, but it is believed that the Government declined the suggestion. It was customary, as it seemed, to make presents of money to military men for doing their duty, but there was no precedent for offering such a reward to volunteer diplomatists. Cobden's friends probably answered that there was no precedent for his disinterested labour. What his own mind was upon this subject is seen in the following letter to Mr. Bright:—

"Algiers, 4 *Feb.* 1861.

"If there be the slightest whisper in any quarter of proposing to *vote* me any money for the work I did in Paris, I rely on your putting a stop to it. Whether such an idea ever occurred to a member of the Government I should doubt. But kind and officious friends have suggested it. I repeat, from whatever quarter it may be spoken of, I rely on your representing my feelings and determination by preventing its being publicly advocated, or, if so, by declining it in my name. It is bad enough to have neglected one's affairs till I am obliged to see something of this sort done privately for my family. But the *two* processes would be intolerable.

"Besides, if there were no other motive, I do not wish to allow the *Government* to be my paymaster, for a totally different reason. The conduct of the head of the Government during my negotiations was so outrageously inconsistent, so insulting to myself in the position in which I was placed, so calculated to impede the work I had in hand, and to render it

1861.
ÆT. 57.

almost impossible for the French Government to fulfil its intentions, that, as I told Lord Cowley, if my heart had not been in my work, I should have thrown up my powers and gone home. I allude, of course, to Lord Palmerston's speech on the fortification scheme, and to his still worse one, if possible, just before the close of Parliament. If I had done justice to myself, I should have put on public record in a formal despatch my opinion of this conduct, which threw ridicule and mockery on my whole proceedings. But I was restrained solely by a regard for the cause in which I was engaged. I was afraid that the real motive was to prevent my completing the work, and was cautious therefore not to give any good ground for quarrelling with me and recalling me.

"To form a fair judgment of this reckless levity and utter want of dignity or decency on the part of the Prime Minister, just turn to the volumes of the *Life of the first Lord Auckland*, who was sent by Pitt to negotiate the Commercial Treaty with France in 1786. I have not seen the book, but I can tell you what you will not find in its pages: you will not read that in the midst of those negotiations Pitt rose in the House and declared that he apprehended danger of a sudden and unprovoked attack on our shores by the French king; that (whilst history told us that we had 84,000 men voted for our navy to the 31,000 in France, and whilst we had 150,000 riflemen assembled for drill) he, Mr. Pitt, pursued the eccentric course of proposing that the nation should spend ten millions on fortifications, and that he accompanied this with speeches in the House in which he imputed treacherous and unprovoked designs upon us on the part of the monarch with whom his own plenipotentiary was then negotiating a treaty of commerce in Paris. On the contrary,

1861. Æt. 57. you will find Pitt consistently defending, in all its breadth and moral bearings, his peaceful policy, and it is the most enduring title to fame that he left in all his public career.[1]

"Yet he had far stronger grounds for suspecting the French king of hostile designs, or of feeling resentment towards him, for we had only three years previously closed a disastrous war with our American colonies, whose successful revolt was greatly the result of the unwarrantable assistance rendered to them by the French Government. On the other hand, Palmerston had not one hostile act *towards us* to allege against the sovereign with whom I was, with his sanction, engaged in negotiating the Treaty.

[1] Cobden was justified in the contrast on which he insisted between Pitt's relations with Eden, and Lord Palmerston's treatment under similar circumstances. The *Auckland Correspondence* (i. 86-122) shows that Pitt entered into the details of the project which he had initiated, with the liveliest zeal and interest. Oddly enough, in the course of the negotiations, suspicions arose in England of the sincerity of the French Government on the same grounds as were discovered in 1860—the alleged increase of the French navy, and a royal visit to Cherbourg, which was supposed to mean mischief to Portsmouth and Plymouth. Eden, however, like Cobden, insisted that at Versailles there was every appearance of a belief that Great Britain and France ought to unite in some solid plan of permanent peace—though Eden, unlike Cobden, laid down the general proposition that "it is difficult to feel confident in the sincerity of any foreign Court." The English papers embarrassed the Government by their demand for the destruction of Cherbourg, but Pitt kept a cool head, along with his firm hand, in the difficult negotiations which followed the Commercial Treaty.

In defending the Treaty, Pitt made the declaration which caused him to be taunted with his degeneracy from the spirit of Chatham: "I shall not hesitate to contend against the too-frequently expressed opinion that France is, and must be, the unalterable enemy of England. My mind revolts from this position as monstrous and impossible. To suppose that any nation can be unalterably the enemy of another is weak and childish." Fox, unluckily for the wholeness of his reputation, insisted on imputing sinister motives to France in the Treaty negotiations.

1861.
ÆT. 57.

The whole affair is so shockingly gross and offensive to serious minds, that, unless we are to degenerate to a nation of political mountebanks, it cannot be much longer tolerated that we are to be governed and represented by such persons."

The Government proposed no vote of money, but they did not intend to leave the negotiator of the Treaty without honourable recognition. While he was in Algiers, Cobden received the following letter from the Prime Minister:—

"94 PICCADILLY, 26 *March* 1861.

"MY DEAR MR. COBDEN—The Queen being desirous of marking the sense she entertains of the public service rendered by you during the long and laborious negotiations in which you were engaged on the subject of the Commercial Treaty with France, her Majesty has authorized me to offer to you either to be created a Baronet, or to be made a Privy Councillor, whichever of the two would be most agreeable to you.

"I am aware that you might not perhaps attach any great intrinsic value to distinctions of this kind, but as an acknowledgment of public services they would not fail to be appreciated.

"My dear Mr. Cobden, yours sincerely,

"PALMERSTON.

"I hope your health has derived all the benefit you desired from the milder winter climate of Algeria. You have at all events escaped the severest English winter upon record."

To this Cobden made the reply that might have been, and probably was, anticipated:—

1861. "ALGIERS, 13*th April* 1861.

Æt. 57. "MY DEAR LORD PALMERSTON—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th March, which reached me yesterday only, on my return after an absence of ten days from Algiers. Whilst entertaining the same sentiment of gratitude towards the Queen which I could have felt if I had accepted the offer you have been so good as to make me in her name, I must beg permission most respectfully to deny myself the honour which Her Majesty has graciously proposed to confer on me. An indisposition to accept a title being in my case rather an affair of feeling than of reason, I will not dwell further on the subject.

"With respect, however, to the particular occasion for which it is proposed to confer on me this distinction, I may say that it would not be agreeable to me to accept a recompense in any form for my recent labours in Paris. The only reward I desire is to live to witness an improvement in the relations of the two great neighbouring nations which have been brought into more intimate connexion by the Treaty of Commerce.

"I remain, my dear Lord Palmerston,

"Yours sincerely,

"R. COBDEN.

"In reply to your kind inquiry, I may say that my health has derived much benefit from the beautiful summer weather which I have had the good fortune to experience here. The winter has been exceptionally fine with us, whilst it seems to have been unusually severe in England."

No other course could have been reconcilable with Cobden's pure and simple type of citizenship.

1861.
ÆT. 57.

To him the service was its own reward. The whole system of decoration was alien to the antique and homely spirit of his patriotism. He never used great words about such things, nor spoke bitterly of those who coveted and prized them. On one occasion Mr. Gladstone, not long after the conclusion of the Treaty, invited him to one of his official State dinners. "To tell you the truth," Cobden replied, "I have never had the courage to get a Court costume; and as I do not like being singular by coming in ordinary dress, I will beg you to excuse me." There were no heroics about him in encountering these trifling symbols of a social ordering with which he did not sympathize. He merely practised, almost without claiming it, the right of living his own plain life, and satisfying his own ideals of civic self-respect.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE POLICY OF THE COMMERCIAL TREATY

1860. Æt. 56

It will be convenient to insert here a few short remarks on the general character of the work that Cobden had now accomplished. We shall find that under a different form it must still be regarded as an extension of the same principles which had inspired his first great effort. It was one more move in the direction of free exchange. By many prominent men, indeed, at the time, and by many more afterwards, the Treaty was regarded as an infraction of sound economic principles. Some came to this opinion from lack of accuracy, but more from a failure in copiousness of thought. One or two of those who had been with Cobden in the van of the assault on the Corn Laws, now looked askance on a transaction which savoured of the fallacy of reciprocity. Those rigid adherents of economics who insist, in Mill's phrase, on treating their science as if it were a thing not to guide our judgment, but to stand in its place, denounced the doctrine of treaties as a new-fangled heresy. Even the old Protectionists professed a virtuous alarm at an innovation on the principles of Free Trade.

The discussion of 1860 did little more than reproduce a discussion that had taken place seventeen years before. When Sir Robert Peel entered

office, he found four sets of negotiations pending for commercial treaties, between England and France, Portugal, Spain, and Brazil. Those with France were obviously the most important. Affairs in Syria had interrupted them, but Peel resumed the negotiations. He was most anxious for a tariff treaty. "I should not," he said, as Pitt had said before him, and as Cobden and Mr. Gladstone said after him, "estimate the advantage of an extended commercial intercourse with France merely in respect to the amount of pecuniary gain; but I value that intercourse on account of the effect it is calculated to produce in promoting the feelings of amity and goodwill between two great nations. I should regard that mutual intercourse in commercial affairs as giving an additional security for the permanent maintenance of peace."[1] Unfortunately, the negotiations fell through. Guizot said that he could not pass any such measure through the Chambers. Nor was there better success in other quarters. 1860. ÆT. 56.

In 1843, Mr. J. L. Ricardo had introduced a resolution in the House of Commons, declaring the inexpediency of postponing remissions of duty with a view of making such remissions a basis of commercial negotiations. This was a reply from the pure economic party to Peel's statement already quoted (see above, p. 223), that he did not reduce the wine duties because he hoped to make them the instruments of treaties with foreign countries. Ricardo prefaced his resolution by a speech, which was very able, but which pressed for Free Trade without delay, restriction, or qualification. The only process to which they need resort against hostile tariffs was to open the ports. Mr. Gladstone answered Ricardo by the same arguments that were

[1] April 25, 1843.

1860. Æt. 56.

afterwards used to defend his own policy in 1860. Mr. Disraeli, not at all disclaiming Free Trade as a general policy, supported Mr. Gladstone against the ultra-Free-Traders in a speech remarkable to this day for its large and comprehensive survey of the whole field of our commerce, and for its discernment of the channels in which it would expand. On the immediate question, Mr. Disraeli gave a definite opinion in support of the Minister. "In forming connexions with the states of Europe," he said, "it was obvious that we could only proceed by negotiations. Diplomacy stepped in to weigh and adjust contending interests, to obtain mutual advantages, and ascertain reciprocal equivalents. Our commerce with Europe could only be maintained and extended by treaties." [1]

Cobden supported Ricardo's motion, not on the rather abstract grounds of the mover and others, but because it was a way of preventing a Government "which was the creature of monopoly, from meddling with any of our commercial arrangements." The envoy to Brazil, he said, had been sent out to obtain the best terms for the West Indian sugar monopolists, and he quoted the description by a Brazilian senator, of the people of Great Britain as the slaves of a corn, sugar, coffee, and timber oligarchy.

Was it fit, Cobden asked, that the executive Government should be allowed to go all over the world to seek for impediments to Free Trade abroad, in order to excuse them in resisting the removal of impediments at home? It might be very well to talk of a commercial treaty with Portugal, but abolish the monopolies of sugar, corn, and coffee, and the vast continents of North and South America would be opened to the manufactures of Great

[1] Feb. 14, 1843. "Sign the Treaty of Commerce with France," Mr. Disraeli cried, "that will give present relief."

1860.
ÆT. 56.

Britain. Characteristically enough, he kept close to the immediate and particular bearings of the discussion, and nothing was said by him in 1843 that was inconsistent with his position in 1860. Ricardo, again, in 1844 brought forward a resolution to the effect that our commercial intercourse with foreign nations would be best promoted by regulating our own Customs duties as might be best suited to our own interests, without reference to the amount of duties which foreign powers might think expedient to levy on British goods. The discussion was very meagre, and the House was counted out.

To return to the Treaty of 1860. Cobden, unable to be present to defend his measure in the House of Commons, took up the points of the case against it in a letter to Mr. Bright:—

"I observe that some of the recent converts to Free Trade, who gave you and me so much trouble to convert *them*, are concerned at our doing anything so unsound as to enter into a Commercial Treaty. I will undertake that there is not a syllable on our side of the Treaty that is inconsistent with the soundest principles of Free Trade. We do not propose to reduce a duty which, on its own merits, ought not to have been dealt with long ago. We give no concessions to France which do not apply to all other nations. We leave ourselves free to lay on any amount of internal duties, and to put on an equal tax on foreign articles of the same kind at the Custom-House. It is true we bind ourselves, for ten years, not otherwise to raise such of our Customs as affect the French trade, or put on fresh ones; and this, I think, no true Free Trader will regret.

"And here I may suggest, that if you observe the members on the Opposition side averse to parting with the power of putting on higher Customs duties

1860. Æt. 56.

on these articles of French origin, it may be well to read them a lesson on the impossibility of their being able to lay any further burdens on commerce in future, and to remind them that if they sanction higher expenditure, they must expect to pay it in a direct income tax. Public opinion, without any French Treaty, is daily tending to this result.

"There being no objection on the ground of principle, there are, and will be, many specious arguments resorted to by those who really at heart have no sympathy for a cordial union between the two nations, for defeating or marring the projected Treaty. Of course these fallacies you will easily deal with. I observe they often answer themselves. For instance, in the same breath, we are told that we have emptied our Budget and given everything to France *already*, and then that we are going *now* to give everything and receive nothing. Then we are told that it is very wrong to reduce the duties on French wines, *because* France is going to lower the duties on British iron; and in the same breath are reproached for including Spain and Portugal in our 'concessions,' without obtaining anything in return! I am really half inclined to share your suspicions that there are influences at work, hostile to any policy which shall put an end to the present state of armed hostility and suspicion between France and England. God forgive me if I do any body of men the injustice of attributing to them wrongfully such an infernal policy. It is, perhaps, hardly consciously that anybody would pursue such a course.

"But surely, if people wished to see the relations of the two countries improved, they would never attempt to impede the only sure means of attaining that end by such frivolous objections. These people seem to think that Free Trade in France can be

1860.
ÆT. 56.

carried by a logical, orderly, methodical process, without resorting to stratagem, or anything like an indirect proceeding. They forget the political plots and contrivances, and the fearful adjuncts of starvation, which were necessary for carrying similar measures in England. They forget how Free Trade was wrested from the reluctant majorities of both our Houses of Parliament. Surely Louis Napoleon has as good a right, and may plead as strong motives of duty, for cheating (if I may use the word) the majorities of his Senate into an honest policy, as Peel had in dealing with the House of Lords. The Emperor of the French was elected by the whole people, not only to administer their laws, but to *legislate* for them. They do not expect, as we do in England, to initiate reforms. They look for amelioration from above. When speaking with the Emperor, he observed to me that the protected interests were organized, and the general public was not; and, therefore, the contest was as unequal as between a disciplined regiment and a mob. The answer was obvious: 'Your Majesty is the organization of the masses.' And I am earnestly of opinion that he is now acting under this impulse and conviction."

The direct effects of the Treaty upon the exchange of products between England and France have been too palpable to be denied. In 1858 the total exports from England to France amounted to no more than nine million pounds, and the imports from France to thirteen millions. Nineteen years later, in 1877, the British exports and re-exports had risen from nine to twenty-five million pounds, and the imports from France to forty-five millions.

The indirect effects of the Treaty were less plainly visible, but they cannot be left out of account if we seek to view the Treaty policy as a whole.

1860. Æt. 56.

England cleared her tariff of Protection, and reduced the duties which were retained for purposes of revenue on the two French staples of wine and brandy. France, on her part, replaced Prohibition by a system of moderate duties. If this had been all, it might have been fair to talk about reciprocity, though even then, when it is a reciprocity in lowering and not in raising duties, the word ceases altogether to be a term of reproach. But the matter did not end here. The treaty with France was not like the famous Methuen Treaty with Portugal (1703), an exclusive bargain, to the specified disadvantage of a nation outside of the compact. In 1703 we bound ourselves to keep our duties on French wines one-third higher than the duty on the wines of Portugal. This was the type of treaty which Adam Smith had in his mind when he wrote his chapter on the subject. Pitt's Treaty with France (1786) was of a different and better kind; and his motive in making it was not diplomatic or political, as had been the case in the old-fashioned treaties of commerce, but truly economical and social. He wished to legalize the commerce which was carried on illegally, and to an immense extent, by smuggling, always the spontaneous substitute for Free Trade; and he boldly accepted, moreover, the seeming paradox that reduction of duties may lead to increase of revenue.[1] Neither party stipulated for any peculiar advantages. Still, the benefits of the Treaty were confined to the two nations who made it. In 1860 England lowered her duties, not only in favour of French products,

[1] "Only 600,000 gallons of French brandy were legally imported in a year, while no less than 4,000,000 of gallons were believed to be every year imported into England. And since there was a total prohibition of French cambrics, every yard of them sold in England must have come in by illicit means."—Lord Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, i. 316-317.

1860.
ÆT. 56.

but in favour of the same products from all other countries. The reforms which France and England now made in favour of one another, in the case of England actually were, and in the case of France were to be, extended to other nations as well. This was not reciprocity of monopoly, but reciprocity of freedom, or partial freedom. England had given up the system of differential duties, and France knew that the products of every other country would receive at the English ports exactly the same measure and treatment as her own. France, on the other hand, openly intended to take her treaty with England as a model for treaties with the rest of Europe, and to concede by treaty, with as many Governments as might wish, a tariff just as favourable as that which had been arranged with England. As a matter of fact, within five years after the negotiations of 1860, France had made treaties with Belgium, the Zollverein, Italy, Sweden and Norway, Switzerland, and Austria.

In these, and in the treaty made afterwards by England with Austria, Sir Louis Mallet reminded its opponents in later years, that each of them had a double operation. Not only does each treaty open the market of another country to foreign industry; it immediately affects the markets that are already opened. For every recent treaty recognized the "most favoured nation" principle, the sheet-anchor of Free Trade, as it has been called. By means of this principle, each new point gained in any one negotiation becomes a part of the common commercial system of the European confederation. "By means of this network," it has been excellently said by a distinguished member of the English diplomatic service, "of which few Englishmen seem to be aware, while fewer still know to whom they owe

1860. Æt. 56.

it, all the great trading and industrial communities of Europe, *i.e.* England, France, Holland, Belgium, the Zollverein (1870), Austria, and Italy, constitute a compact international body, from which the principle of monopoly and exclusive privilege has once for all been eliminated, and not one member of which can take off a single duty without all the other members at once partaking in the increased trading facilities thereby created. By the self-registering action of the most favoured nation clause, common to this network of treaties, the tariff level of the whole body is being continually lowered, and the road being paved towards the final embodiment of the Free Trade principle in the international engagement to abolish all duties other than those levied for revenue purposes."

In face of unquestioned facts of this kind, nothing can be less statesmanlike than to deny that the treaties since 1860 have helped forward the great process of liberating the exchange of the products of their industry among the nations of the world. It is amazing to find able men so overmastered by a mistaken conception of what it is that economic generalization can do for us, as to believe that they nullify the substantial service thus rendered by commercial treaties of Cobden's type to the beneficent end of international co-operation, by the mere utterance of some formula of economic incantation. If the practical effect of the commercial treaties after 1860, as conceived and inspired by Cobden, has been, without any drawback worth considering, to lead Europe by a considerable stride towards the end proposed by the partisans of Free Trade, then it is absurd to quarrel with the treaties because they do not sound in tune with the verbal jingle of an abstract dogma. It is beside the mark to meet the advantages

gained by the international action of commercial treaties, by the formula, "Take care of your imports, and the exports will take care of themselves." The decisive consideration is that we can only procure imports from other countries on the cheapest possible terms, on condition that producers in those countries are able to receive our exports on the cheapest possible terms. Foreign producers can only do this, on condition that their Governments can be induced to lower hostile tariffs; and foreign Governments are only able, or choose to believe that they are only able, to lower tariffs in face of the strength of the protected interests, by means of a commercial treaty. The effect of a chain of such treaties—and the chain is automatically linked together by the favoured nation clause—is to lower duties all round, and lowering duties all round is the essential and indispensable condition of each country procuring for itself on the lowest possible terms imports from all other countries.

It is an economic error to confine our view to the imports or exports of our own country. In the case of England, these are intimately connected with, and dependent upon, the great circulating system of the whole world's trade. Nobody has fully grasped the bearings of Free Trade, who does not realize what the international aspect of every commercial transaction amounts to; how the conditions of production and exchange in any one country affect, both actually and potentially, the corresponding conditions in every other country. It is not Free Trade between any two countries that is the true aim; but to remove obstacles in the way of the stream of freely exchanging commodities, that ought, like the Oceanus of primitive geography, to encircle the whole habitable world. In this circulating system every tariff is an obstruction,

1860. Æt. 56

and the free circulation of commodities is in the long run as much impeded by an obstruction at one frontier as at another.[1] This is one answer to an idea which has been lately broached among us, under stress of the temporary reaction against Free Trade. It has been suggested that though we cannot restore Protection in its old simplicity, yet we might establish a sort of National Imperial Customs Union among the English dominions. The territory over which the flag of Great Britain waves is so enormous and so varied in productive conditions, that we could well afford, it is urged, to shut ourselves within our own walls, developing our own resources, and consolidating a strong national sentiment, until the nations who are now fighting us with protective tariffs come round to a better mind. The answer to this is that the removal of the restriction on the circulation to a more distant point would not affect the vital fact that the circulation would still be restricted and interrupted. To induce our colonies and dependencies to admit our goods free, would of course be so much gained; just as the freedom of interior or domestic commerce, which was one of the chief causes of the early prosperity of Great Britain, was by so much a gain over the French system, which cut off province from province by Customs barriers during the same period. But freedom of internal commerce, whether within an island or over a wide empire, is still not the same thing as universal freedom of exchange. An interruption, at whatever point in the great currents of exchange, must always remain an interruption and a disadvantage. England is especially interested in

[1] This is worked out with vigour and acuteness in the admirable pamphlet published by the Cobden Club in 1870, entitled, *Commercial Treaties: Free Trade and Internationalism. Four Letters by a disciple of Richard Cobden.*

1860.
ÆT. 56.

any transaction that tends to develop trade between any nations whatever. We derive benefit from it in one way or another. The mother country has no interest in going into a Customs Union with her colonies, with the idea of giving them any advantage, or supposed advantage, in trading with her over foreign countries.

It is not enough, therefore, to remove our own protective duties, though Peel may have been right under the circumstances of the time in saying that the best way of fighting a hostile tariff is by reforming your own. It is the business of the economic statesman to watch for opportunities of inducing other nations to modify duties on imports; because the release of the consumers of other nations is not only a stimulus to your own production for exportation, but has an effect in the supply of the imports which you declare to be the real object of your solicitude.

This was the conception at the bottom of the Commercial Treaty of 1860. "A treaty with France," said Mr. Gladstone, "is even in itself a measure of no small consequence; but that which gives to a measure of that kind its highest value is its tendency to produce beneficial imitation in other quarters. It is the fact that, in concluding that Treaty, we did not give to one a privilege which we withheld from another, but that our Treaty with France was, in fact, a treaty with the world, and wide are the consequences which engagements of that kind carry in their train."

CHAPTER XXXIII

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE, 1859-60—PARIS—RETURN TO ENGLAND

1859. Æt. 55.

THE business of the Treaty did not prevent Cobden from keeping up his usual copious correspondence. Much of it, as might be expected, had to do with his work in Paris; but he kept a keen eye upon what was going on elsewhere, and no effort that pointed in the right direction escaped him. Some extracts from the correspondence of this period will still be found interesting, both because they illustrate the character of the writer, and because they contain ideas on questions which even now are far from having run their full course.

(1) To Mr. Bright

On December 1, 1859, Mr. Bright made a speech at Liverpool, upon the invitation of the Financial Reform Association of that city. In this speech he unfolded a plan, which, as has been truly said of it, involved a complete financial revolution. The main features of the proposals were, that the Income Tax, the assessed taxes (except the House Tax), the tax on marine and fire insurances, and the excise on paper, should be repealed; all duties in the tariff should be abolished, save those on wine, spirits, and tobacco; and, to replace the deficiency thus created, there should be a tax of eight shillings on every hundred pounds of fixed income.

1859. ÆT. 55.

"*Dec.* 16, 1859.—I have been much pleased with the perusal of your masterly statement at Liverpool, every word of which I have read. After all, I hardly know that the Liverpool men could do a better service than in preaching the abstract doctrine of direct taxation. People are attracted by the advocacy of a *principle*, to which alone we can feel any strong and lasting devotion. The threat of direct taxes held over our aristocracy, may perhaps do a little to restrain their proneness to Government extravagance; and it will help an honest Chancellor of the Exchequer to move forward in the path of commercial reform. There is an *apparent* tendency in your speeches to advocate the interest of the working class as apart from the upper classes. Now, I am sorry to say that whenever the case is so posed, there is a tendency in the middle class to range themselves with those above them, to resist a common danger. Your witticism of the middle class being invited to be the squire of the class above has been realized. Therefore, I have always studiously abstained from using the words 'working class,' as apart from the middle class, in discussing the question of taxation. For you see how eagerly your opponents parade the poor widow of £100 a year. I cannot separate the interest of the small shopkeeper and the labourer, or the manufacturer and his operatives, in the question of taxation. Indeed, ultimately, God has made all our interests in the matter one and indivisible. I do not believe there is a hairbreadth of difference between us, but you seem to take the working class sometimes too exclusively under your protection. They are quite powerless as opposed to the middle and upper classes, which is a good reason why they should not be allowed to be made to appear to be in antagonism to both.

"There is another point on which we should not

1859. Æt. 55.

differ in our cool moments, but on which you are sometimes carried away in the excitement of a speech beyond me. I mean where you seem to assume that a wiser policy in taxation or other matters will necessarily follow from a democratic reform. I am always willing to take my chance of the consequences of such a change. If the majority in a democracy injure me and themselves at the same time by unsound legislation, I have at least the consolation of knowing that they are honest in their errors, and that a conviction of their mistake will for their own sakes lead to a change. It is far different where you are wronged by a self-interested minority. But I do not feel so confident as yourself that a great extension of the franchise would necessarily lead to a wiser system of taxation. On this subject I got a letter lately from Senator Mason, of Virginia, in which he says, speaking of direct taxation—'Our people are not yet philosophical enough to know that it is safer to feel the tax when you pay it, than to pay it without feeling it.' I am afraid that this rather pithy remark would apply to all other people at present. I have done with my dissentient remarks, which after all would not lead me into an opposite lobby to yourself, if we had five minutes' discussion together."

(2) To Mr. Bright

Considerations on Mr. Bright's general course and policy.

"*Dec.* 29, 1859.—You will be speaking at Birmingham again soon. It is hard to tell what to say. If you are intense on Reform, you will have a hearty response from the meeting, and little beyond it. If you are cooler than your wont, you will disappoint your hearers. Were I in your place, I should not

1859.
ÆT. 55.

dwell too much on the Reform topic. But then, what else can you talk about? I should like to see you turn the tables on those who have wasted another autumn on another bubble cry. But perhaps people are not yet sufficiently out of breath with the cry to listen to you. I observe the *Times*, having led the pack all through the phantom chase, is now turning round, and saying that it was not from fear of the French that we were called on to arm. And this line is taken by its followers. I have always observed that, as the time for the meeting of Parliament approaches, the newspapers put on a more decent regard for propriety and consistency. They feel that a power of refutation and exposure is at hand when the House is in session. This last autumn's escapade of the good British public, calling its youth to arm against an imaginary foe, after having seen twenty-six millions voted for its protection, is one of the most discouraging and humiliating spectacles I have witnessed. The effect it has on me is to produce a feeling of indifference. To be too much in earnest in the cause of common sense, with the liability to see one's countrymen running mad every year or two after any visionary programme launched by the anonymous writers of the *Times*, is only calculated to injure one's digestion, and perhaps ruin one's health; and so I try to cultivate a stoical apathy.

"Perhaps we are wrong in aiming at producing too large results within a given time. I do not, as I grow older, lose my faith in humanity and its future destinies; but I do every year—perhaps it is natural with increasing years—feel less sanguine in my hope of seeing any material change in my own day and generation. I sometimes doubt whether you would not have done more wisely to

1859. ÆT. 55.

rely on your House of Commons influence, and been more shy of the Stump. Your greatest power is in the House. In quiet times, there is no influence to be had from without, and if we fell into evil days of turbulence, and suffering and agitation, less scrupulous leaders would carry off the masses. You are not the less qualified to take your true position, from having shown that you are an outside, as well as an inside, leader. But I have an opinion that if you intend to follow politics, and not eschew office, you must in future be more exclusively a House of Commons man.

"And then you must make up your mind to accept certain conditions of things as a part of our English political existence during your time. For instance, the Church and Aristocracy are great realities, which will last for your life and your sons'. To ignore them or despise them is equally incompatible with the part which I think you have the ambition to play, and which I am sure you are competent to perform. I remember that President Buchanan, the day before he left London on his return to America, in the course of a conversation over the tea-table, remarked: 'I leave England with the conviction that you are not yet able to govern yourselves without the aid of your aristocracy.' There are things to be done which you and I could make a so-called Liberal Government do, if we were out of the Cabinet, without being held ineligible by the Court and Aristocracy (*with whom the most powerful part of the middle class will be found sympathizing*) to enter it, owing to any extreme democratic designs. But we are comparatively powerless if we can be assumed to be excluded from the Government by either our own will, or that of the ruling class,

owing to our entertaining revolutionary or fundamentally subversive doctrines. One great object which I should like to force our rulers, much against their will, to accomplish, is the limitation of our armed force, in relation to that of France. And this I will endeavour to promote, if I am spared, and my present task is successful, by an appeal to the French Government in the same unofficial way as I am now at work upon another affair. But I feel convinced that the great obstacle would be with our own ruling class. 1859. ÆT. 55.

"This could only be overcome by an honest party in the House, of which you must be the head. My talking days are, I think, nearly over; I have no confidence in my voice serving me much in future. I suffer no inconvenience now; but a hoarseness interposes if I talk much, and I feel as if half an hour's public speaking would render me inaudible. However, I shall go to Cannes as soon as this business is decided one way or another, which must be within a fortnight. When I speak of being held eligible for office, I merely refer to the power which that gives us in the House. I have no intention to take office under any circumstances, because I think I could do more good out of office. Besides, it is too late even if I liked it. I am in my fifty-sixth year, and do not come of a long-lived parentage.

"I thought of saying a few words about the state of opinion here [Paris], the designs of the Emperor, et cetera. I have no prejudice against a voluntary armed force like the riflemen of Switzerland, or the militia of America, though it is open to question whether Joseph Hume was right in preferring a regular armed profession, on the principle of the division of labour. But the origin of

1860. ÆT. 56.

our rifle corps, just after we had voted twenty-six millions for our armed professions, as a means of defence, and instigated by real or pretended fear of France, is such as to make the movement a disgraceful act of folly—speaking of the nation, and not of all the individuals who have been drawn into it."

(3) To William Hargreaves

Remarks on the writings of Louis Napoleon.

"*Cannes, March* 14, 1860.—I have been amusing myself with reading very carefully the works of Louis Napoleon. They are published under his own auspices, in four splendid volumes, and are said to be without the alteration of a word. They have been lent to me, but if you were in an extravagant humour, they might be worth your buying. Besides the interest we all have in knowing what has been passing through such a brain for the last thirty years, the style of his composition is a model worth studying. Baron Bunsen, who is here, tells me, apropos of his style, that De Tocqueville, who died lately at Cannes, and who was no friend of the Emperor's, declared that Louis Napoleon was the only man living who could write 'monumental French.' It is, I suppose, the consciousness of the possession of this talent, so greatly appreciated in France, which leads him to come so frequently before the public in print; for if he be taciturn in oral communications, the quality assuredly does not attach to his pen. . . . But when we have praised his style, we have expressed the best that can be said of his volumes. Most assuredly we cannot endorse all that he says as a political economist, as the enclosed extract will show.

1860. ÆT. 56.

There are some curious historical chapters upon the progress of artillery, a subject to which he seems to have devoted much study, and which now possesses great interest. But the chief charm of his works is in the absolute perfection of the style of his occasional addresses, extending over a series of years. That one in particular announcing his intended marriage as a parvenu, and giving his reasons for making choice of a private individual for his wife, is the most striking of all for the ingenuity and boldness of his argument, and the beauty of its composition. I must say I sought in vain for traces of that spirit of vindictiveness towards England which politicians of the Horsman school tell us, with so much solemn mysteriousness, pervades his writings. The whole tone of his works seems to me to be so singularly forbearing and magnanimous towards the implacable and successful enemy of his great idol, the first Bonaparte; he treats the whole matter with so much philosophy when referring to the death struggle between France and England, that I wonder the alarmists and invasionists never discovered a plot in the absence of all passionate resentment towards us, which characterizes these volumes."

The following is the passage referred to:—

(*Œuvres de Napoléon, Tome Deuxième, p.* 234.)

"L'Angleterre a réalisé le rêve de certains économistes modernes; elle surpasse toutes les autres nations dans le bon marché de ses produits manufacturés. Mais cet avantage, si c'en est un, n'a été obtenu qu'au préjudice de la classe ouvrière. Le vil prix de la marchandise dépend du vil prix du travail, et le vil prix du travail, c'est la misère du peuple. Il ressort d'une publication récente, que pendant les dernières années, tandis que l'industrie

1860. Æt. 56.

Anglaise triplait sa production, la somme employée pour solder les ouvriers, diminuait *d'un tiers*. Elle a été reduite de quinze millions à dix millions de livres sterling. Le consommateur a gagné, il est vrai, le tiers du salaire prélevé sur la sueur de l'ouvrier; mais de là aussi sont venus les perturbations et la malaise, qui ont affecté profondement la prosperité de la Grande Bretagne. Si, en France, les partisans de la liberté du commerce osaient mettre en pratique leurs funestes théories, la France perdrait en richesse une valeur d'au moins deux milliards; deux millions d'ouvriers resteraient sans travail, et notre commerce serait privé du bénéfice qu'il tire de l'immense quantité de matières premières qui sont importées pour alimenter nos manufactures.[1]

"Fort de Ham, Août 1842."

(4) To W. Hargreaves

Effect of going too and fro between London and Paris.

"*Paris, April* 23, 1860.—A curious influence is exerted on my mind in going too and fro between London and Paris, which helps to account for what is almost unaccountable. When in England, I find myself so surrounded with sayings and doings which are founded on the assumption of evil designs on the part of the Emperor towards England, that I feel, in spite of myself, a little infected with doubt as to our safety. In fact, I breathe an atmosphere tainted with panic, and I become affected by the general uneasiness. If this be so in my case, in spite of my predilections and my sane surroundings, how much more must other people be affected? When I come to Paris, and approach close to the

[1] This extract contains some very erroneous doctrine as to the effect of increasing trade on workmen. But it is not necessary to discuss the matter here.

imagined source of danger, all uneasiness and doubt disappear from my mind. In fact all idea of England being attacked by France is founded on the ignorance of what is going on here, and on the play of the imagination when the danger is afar off. Here is an illustration, by the way, of the advantage which will arise from more intimate intercourse between the two countries."

1860. ÆT. 56.

(5) To W. Hargreaves

The state of Europe.

"*Paris, May* 7, 1860.—I have given a note of introduction to you to an old friend, Mr. Dunville, from the neighbourhood of Belfast, who with his mother and sister are stopping a fortnight in London, on their way from this to Ireland. They are first-rate people in our sense, and you will be very much pleased if you pass an evening in their society.

"We are now beginning the labours of the commission. If I were to judge by the programme setting forth our plan of proceedings, the task might last a couple of years. But I take it for granted that all the intended inquiries into every article of the French tariff will very soon shape itself into a rule of thumb, and that the Government, which has already all the information at its fingers'-ends, will undertake to act on its own responsibility. Whatever may be the result, I have made up my mind to be well abused for a year or two. In the end, after a few years' trial, the Treaty will justify itself. This assumes that we remain at peace, which the *Times* and its patrons seem bent on preventing.

"The state of Germany is very unsatisfactory.

1860. Æt. 56.

Enormous sums are being wasted by a very poor people in preparations for war. There is a great uneasiness both with respect to their internal and external relations. The worst of it is that, as I learn, influential politicians in Prussia are beginning to hold this language: 'We must have a war with France sooner or later, and it is the only way in which we can get rid of our internal discords, and swamp the small States under the Rule of Prussia.' These people say: 'We should be beaten back by France at the first shock, but we should recover everything with interest.' My belief is, that at this moment Louis Napoleon is about the most peaceable person in Europe. Everybody in France is well satisfied with the Savoy business, and the Emperor was never so popular. But he knows that he is mistrusted by all Europe, and that it would be dangerous to attempt any fresh extension of his boundaries. However, it must not be supposed that he has any love for the present territorial arrangements in Europe. There is no doubt that he would like to give Mr. Wyld an excuse for publishing another map of France. But he would not like it at the expense of a war with England.

"I am not very proud of the spectacle presented by our merchants, brokers, and M.P.'s, in their ovations to the pugilist Sayers. This comes from the brutal instincts having been so sedulously cultivated by our wars in the Crimea and especially in India and China. I have always dreaded that our national character would undergo deterioration (as did that of Greece and Rome) by our contact with Asia. With another war or two in India and China, the English people would have an appetite for bull-fights, if not for gladiators."

1861.
Æt. 57.

(6) To W. Hargreaves

Two Reasons against Political Despondency.

"*June* 5, 1860.—I am sorry to see that you have been laid up. Depend on it, you overdo the work in proportion to your forces. Don't let public matters worry you. Why should you? Whatever evils befall the country, you at least, in proportion to your strength, have done more than your share to prevent them. There are two things which we must always bear in mind when we grow impatient or desponding. How much has been done before us: how many will come after us to do what remains to be done."[1]

(7) To Mr. Bright

In 1860 violent disturbances broke out among the Christian population of Syria. They were followed by the despatch of a force of occupation from the European Powers, and a Commissioner was appointed for the re-organization of Syria. The discussion in the spring of 1861, between the French and English Governments, turned on the continuance of the European occupation.

"*Algiers*, 18*th March* 1861.—From what I hear from Paris, the two Governments are wrangling over Syrian matters. After what I saw of the spirit of the Foreign Office, it is always a source of wonder to me how any business in which the two Governments are concerned ever comes to an issue, and how they escape for six months from a rupture.

[1] On the other hand, on July 16, 1860, writing to a friend on the agitation kindled by the action of the House of Lords against the repeal of the Paper Duties, Cobden said: "What strikes me in all these movements is the absence of new men. The good old veterans of the League turn up, but where are the young politicians?"

1861. For recollect, it is not merely Lord John's lecturing, but the ill-conditioned temper of —— and the subordinates with whom the details of the negotiations rest, that has to be borne by the French Government. No one can defend, on principle, the French intervention in Syria. But our Government violates the principle of non-intervention towards the Turk every day; and every statesman in Europe, with the sole exception of Palmerston, recognizes the unavoidable fall of Ottoman rule at an early day, and the necessity of providing or recognizing some other mode of governing Turkey. Our Government alone now contends for the integrity of that ghastly phantom, the Ottoman Porte, at the same time that it lends its sanction by conferences at Paris, and commissions in Syria and Constantinople, to the violation of the rights of the Sultan's sovereignty. It is only when it is convenient for a topic for a diplomatic wrangle with Russia and France, or to reconcile the British public to a war, that the Sublime Porte is paraded as an independent Power, whose sovereign rights are to be treated with respect. Is there no way of bringing matters to a different attitude? In my opinion nothing can be so dangerous as the present mode of treating the Turkish question. Either we ought to apply the same principle as in Italy—viz. allow the races of the same language and religion to join in putting down a foreign domination —or else to interfere to some final purpose. If the Great Powers will allow the Greeks outside of the present Turkish Empire to give their fellow countrymen, or at least their co-religionists of the same language and race, *material* aid, they will soon succeed, with the aid of the other Christian sects, in driving the Turks beyond the Bosphorus, and ere long in securing possession of the coast of Asia

Æt. 57.

1861. ÆT. 57.

Minor and Syria. And why should this not be permitted by those who are so warm in their support of Garibaldi, who sallied forth from Nice with no better title to overturn the Neapolitan Government than the people of Athens or Syria would possess to drive the Turks from their less justifiable domination in Constantinople? In fact the foreigner has practically ruled Italy longer than the Osmanlis have possessed the ancient capital of the Greeks. But if England is not prepared to allow the Christians to drive out their Mahometan rulers, what is she prepared to do? Surely it becomes a great country to have a policy which lifts its diplomacy out of the reach of mere intrigue and endless altercation and gossip, such as characterizes our present abortive proceedings on the Turkish question. The way in which we tolerate, nay perpetuate, the hideous evils of the Sultan's Government, *because it is not convenient to our politicians to bring the Eastern Question to an issue* —the way in fact in which we prevent a body from dying which is no longer able to live, and look on complacently whilst millions of intelligent beings are suffering from contact with this despotism, tends to degrade Englishmen in the eyes of foreign nations, presenting us in the light of a selfish and unsympathizing people.

"There are a couple of volumes of De Tocqueville's correspondence and remains lately published, and in his letters to Senior and other English friends (which are full of interest), he alludes very delicately to the little sympathy felt for us in our Indian troubles by the nations of the Continent, and attributes it to the general impression that prevails (and which he says is not quite unfounded), that the English people make their foreign policy entirely subservient to their own narrow interests."

1860.
Æt. 56.

(8) To Samuel Lucas

The Syrian Massacres—French Intervention.

"*Paris, August* 16, 1860.—I am disappointed that more is not said and done to create sympathy for the many thousand homeless widows and orphans in Syria. So great a calamity, so near to our doors by steam and telegram, ought to excite more compassion. Pray advocate subscriptions to relieve the sufferers. Money is really the form in which intervention is most needed, though I would not say a word in opposition to French succour in a more potent form. How are the guilty to be punished, or those sold into captivity to be recovered, unless an European armed force appear on the scene? The Turkish soldiers cannot be depended on, for the simple reason that they are not paid."

(9) To Mr. Bright

Free Trade could only have been carried while the Nation was in a sober mood.

"To my eye, from this distance, there seems a strange contempt of sober domestic politics among the English people. They have been *blasés* by wars in India and the Crimea and by the great events of the Continent, and are like people who have drunk to excess, or eaten nothing but spiced meats, and cannot relish anything less exciting. I have often thought how lucky we were that when struggling for Free Trade in corn, the Continent was slumbering under Louis Philippe's soporific reign, and that we had to deal with statesmen like Peel and Lord Aberdeen, who were too honest and sedate to get up

1860.
ÆT. 56.

a war or foreign complications to divert attention from home grievances. Think how impossible it would be in these times to keep public attention for seven years to one domestic grievance. Why, Garibaldi would draw off the eyes of the country from any agitation you could raise in our day! The concentrated earnestness with which political parties were at work in the United States, inspired me with full faith that the people of the country would, in spite of the difficulties and dangers of their political issues, work out their salvation. If I had found them engaged in settling the affairs of the whole world, instead of their own, I should have despaired."

(10) To William Hargreaves

Annexation of Savoy.

"I should like to know what practical result is likely to follow from our Foreign Minister persevering in borrowing the tone of Mr. Kinglake and Sir Robert Peel in his despatches to the French Government. The annexation of Savoy to France is a *fait accompli*. The bargain has pleased Piedmont, the Savoyards, and the French people, the only parties *really* interested; and why, instead of the snarling, dissatisfied tone in which our Foreign Minister persists in treating the matter, cannot he dismiss it with a little of the dignity with which the Russian or Austrian Government has got rid of the disagreeable affair. There is nothing so unworthy of a nation, or even of a man, as a tone of dissatisfied criticism which leaves no after-resource but a fit of pouting and sulking. It is a style of controversy fit only for the nursery. I should like to know whether the correspondence now going on between our

1860. Foreign Office and the American Government upon
Æt. 56. the subject of the island of St. Juan, is conducted in the same captious, irritating tone as that which has characterized some of our recent despatches to France, Austria, and Naples. If so, the train is being laid for either a war or a great humiliation."

(11) To William Hargreaves

Hopelessness of our Rule in India.

"*Paris, August* 4, 1860.—To confess the truth I have no heart for discussing any of the *details* of Indian management, for I look on our rule there as a whole with an eye of despair. Whether you put a screen before your eyes and call it a local army, or whether you bring the management face to face in London, the fact is still the same. The English people in Parliament have undertaken to be responsible for governing one hundred and fifty millions of people, despotically, in India. They have adopted the principle of a military despotism, and I have no faith in such an undertaking being anything but a calamity and a curse to the people of England. Ultimately, of course, Nature will assert the supremacy of her laws, and the whiteskins will withdraw to their own latitudes, leaving the Hindoos to the enjoyment of the climate to which their complexion is suited. In the meantime we shall suffer all kinds of trouble, loss, and disgrace. Every year will witness an increased drain of men and money to meet the loss entailed on us. In the meantime, too, an artificial expansion of our exports growing out of Government expenditure in India, will delude us as to the value of our 'possessions' in the East, and the pride of territorial greatness will prevent our loosening our

1860. ÆT. 56.

hold upon them. Is it not just possible that we may become corrupted at home by the reaction of arbitrary political maxims in the East upon our domestic politics, just as Greece and Rome were demoralized by their contact with Asia? But I am wandering into the regions of the remote future. It is, however, from an abiding conviction in my mind that we have entered upon an impossible and hopeless career in India, that I can never bring my mind to take an interest in the details of its government."

(12) To Henry Ashworth

The War in China.

"*Paris, August* 27, 1860.— . . . I have been watching with interest the course of events in China, where, it seems, we are performing the double and rather inconsistent task of aiding the rebellion in the interior and putting it down on the coast! It is well known that by our wars with the Chinese—by paralysing the central Government and destroying its prestige with its people,—we help the rebels in their work of confusion and slaughter. But on their approach to Shanghai we are, it seems, to help the Government to resist the insurgents. But of what use will the seaports be if the interior of the empire, where silk and tea are grown, is to be given up to pillage and anarchy? Think of the Americans coming to let loose fire and slaughter in Lancashire and Yorkshire, but setting up at the same time as the protectors of Liverpool! Where is all this folly and wickedness to end? Shall we ever learn to live at peace and be content with the honest possessions with which God has so bountifully blessed our

1860. Æt. 56.

island? Unfortunately, we have a class—and that the most influential one—which makes money out of these distant wars, or these home panics about a French invasion. How could your aristocracy endure without this expenditure for wars and armaments? Could not a less worthy and inhuman method of supporting them be hit upon? When I am talking over the reduction of duties with M. Rouher, and we come to some small industry employing a few hands and a little capital, which has put in its claim for high protection, I am in the habit of suggesting to him that rather than interfere with the trade of the country for the purpose of feeding and clothing these small protected interests, he had better withdraw the parties from their unprofitable occupations, take some handsome apartments for them in the Louvre Hotel, and feast them on venison and champagne at the country's expense for the rest of their days. Might not a similar compromise be entered into with the younger sons of our aristocracy, instead of supporting them by the most costly of all processes, that of war or preparation for war?" . . .

(13) To Samuel Lucas

Anti-social Interest of great Producers.

"*Paris*, 1860.—I looked in yesterday at Galignani's reading-room (where I had not been before) to glance at the papers. They are of course all high-priced, and not one word was said in any one of them, weekly, daily, or provincial, upon the subject in question. This very conspiracy to ignore the question of the Paper Duty ought to be the most conclusive argument in favour of its repeal. It proves that the high-priced papers have an interest

opposed to that of the public. I remember when Lord Althorp was Chancellor of the Exchequer, being one of a deputation of calico-printers urging on the Government the repeal of the excise duty on prints. In the course of the conversation it was remarked that some of the largest printers were opposed to the movement, on which Lord Althorp, with that instinctive good sense which characterized him, observed: 'That is in my opinion one of the strongest possible arguments in your favour, for it is evident if the great calico-printers are in favour of the tax, that their interest cannot be the public interest.'" 1861. ÆT. 57.

(14) To Samuel Lucas

Politics in the Counties.

"*Algiers, 23rd February* 1861.—It is a mistake to suppose, because there are no contests in the counties, and because a few nobles or proprietors settle the candidatures and the returns in every case, that there is no political spirit in our provincial towns and villages. There is more healthy Radicalism to be found scattered about our small towns and villages than in the larger boroughs. I mean that it is a more sturdy kind of democratic sentiment, for it goes directly against the feudal domination under which we really live, whereas in the great towns Radicalism often misses its mark and is assailing some insignificant grievance. If you can see your way for carrying out this idea, I would take some apropos occasion for announcing[1] the intention to 'open up,' as we say of China, the politics of our counties. You would then have volunteers aiding you with informa-

[1] Mr. Lucas was now Editor of the *Morning Star*.

1861. — ÆT. 57.

tion. Let it be seen who are the men who really return the county members. Show how absolutely the 5 to 10,000 registered electors are ignored in the choice of their representatives. No meetings to discuss the question, no contests, not even a newspaper controversy, to decide the merits of candidates who are generally totally unknown by any political antecedents. Challenge a comparison between the mode of doing these things in the counties and the large boroughs, as well as between the merits of the knights of the shire, and the burgesses returned to Parliament."

(15) To William Hargreaves

Life in Algiers—The English Working Class.

"*Algiers, 1st March* 1861.—The weather here continues all that could be possibly desired. The scenery around Algiers for walking or horse exercise is remarkably beautiful. It is threaded with footpaths and Arab tracks in all directions, presenting a great variety of views. I have hardly ever seen a city possessing such resources in its neighbourhood. We have a clear sky generally, or with only a few clouds to break the monotony. Very seldom any rain. It is very hot in the sun's rays. A thermometer on a table in front of the house stood the other day at 95. But in the shade it is quite different. . . . This difference between the sun and shade makes it difficult to avoid getting a chill. It is this, too, that prevents vegetation coming on before its time; for although we have green peas and flowers in abundance, and the almond trees and others are showing young fruit, yet the vines and other trees have not yet begun to shoot. You must not, however, suppose

1861. ÆT. 57.

from this that the nights are cold. Such a thing as a white frost is not known. Fogs are equally unknown. If called on to say, I should be of opinion that the air is too sharp and clear for active consumptive cases. But for a person without organic disease, but with a tendency to asthma or pulmonary weakness, I should consider it excellent.

"My friends advise me to remain till after Easter, which happens very early this year, and I think I shall do so. There is certainly nothing in the House to tempt one to return. The tone of the leading, or rather misleading, members is just of that hollow mocking kind which would worry me into bad health. I wonder the working people are so quiet under the taunts and insults offered them. Have they no Spartacus among them to head a revolt of the slave class against their political tormentors? I suppose it is the reaction from the follies of Chartism, which keeps the present generation so quiet. However, it is certain that so long as five millions of men are silent under their disabilities, it is quite impossible for a few middle-class members of Parliament to give them liberty, and this is the language I shall hold when called on to speak to them. It is bad enough that we have a political machine which will not move till the people put their shoulders to the wheel. But we must face things as they are, and not live in a dreamland of our own creating. The middle class have never gained a step in the political scale without long labour and agitation out-of-doors, and the working people may depend on it they can only rise by similar efforts, and the more plainly they are told so the better."

1861.
Æt. 57.

(16) To J. Parkes

Arles-Dufour—The Rights of Women.

"*Feb.* 11, 1860.—It is charming to see him at sixty-five with his heart still running off with his head! He would not allow the word 'obey' to be used by women in the marriage ceremony, and has other very rebellious notions. My doctrine is that in proportion as physical force declines in the world, and moral power acquires the ascendant, women will gain in the scale. Christianity in its doctrines, though not yet coming up to its own standard in its practice, did more than anything since the world began to elevate women. The Quakers have *acted* Christianity, and their women have approached nearer to an equality with the other sex than any of the descendants of Eve. I am always labouring to put down physical force, and substitute something better, and therefore I consider myself a fellow-labourer with your daughter in the cause of women's rights! And yet, strange to say, women are the greatest favourers of soldiering and sailoring and all that appertains to war."

It was the 6th of May before Cobden arrived in Paris on his way home. On the 12th, he had an audience of the Emperor at the Tuileries—the last interview that they had.

"*May* 12.—The Emperor spoke upon the Turkish question and the affairs of Syria, and seemed to regret the misunderstandings which arose upon the subject between himself and the English Government. I suggested that the two countries should come to a frank agreement; that neither of them would take a hectare of territory from Turkey in Europe; that the same policy should be enforced upon Russia and

1861.
ÆT. 57.

Austria; that then the doctrine of non-intervention which had been applied to Italy, should be adopted towards European Turkey; that the Christians should be allowed to drive the Turks back into Asia; that the Greeks had a right to repossess themselves of their ancient capital of Constantinople; and no foreign Power had a right to stand between them and the recovery of their rights from their Mahometan conquerors. He remarked that it would be desirable to let Austria have Bosnia and Herzegovina, in exchange for Venetia; and that it had been the policy of Russia to prevent the formation of a Greek empire at Constantinople. I urged strongly that if France and England were to apply the policy of non-intervention to Turkey in Europe, and renounce all selfish objects themselves, they would be in so strong a position both morally and materially as to be able to dictate the same course to Russia. I urged the necessity of abandoning the idea of sustaining the Turks in Europe; that the Christians in Turkey constituted the only element of progress; that they possessed the wealth, carried on the commerce, and comprised the artists, professional men, etc.; that the Turks did not possess a single vessel engaged in foreign trade; and that all the commerce of the Black Sea and the eastern parts of the Mediterranean were rapidly falling into their hands (the Greeks); in fact, Turkey in Europe, so far as the Mahometan population was concerned, had hardly more relations with the progress and civilization of the age, than Timbuctoo had.

"*May* 14*th.*—Called on Mdme. Cornu, a lady who from her childhood had been the playmate and friend of the Emperor, and who showed us a couple of volumes of his letters to her, the first of which was dated in 1820, when he was only twelve years

1861. ÆT. 57.

old. Several of the letters were read to us. They were written in an affectionate and sentimental tone. She described him as possessing a feminine softness of character, that he always as a boy was very slow and vacillating in choosing any course of action, but that when once decided, he followed his bent with great energy. She did not regard him as a genius, but as possessing great good sense, with a very amiable disposition.

"*May* 15.—Dined with M. Rouher, Minister of Commerce, and met a large party. Had a conversation with the Minister of Marine, who narrated to me the facts of the explanations he had had with Mr. Lindsay respecting the force of the two navies; said he had invited Lord Clarence Paget to come over and inspect the French navy and ascertain the truth of the statement made by the French Government. He (the Minister of Marine) stated that the French did not aim at an equality with the English, but merely to be the first of the second-class Powers; that they relied on their army and regarded their navy as merely an accessory, whilst England trusted to her navy, and only looked to her army as an accessory. He complained that England had last year greatly exceeded the fair proportion which she was accustomed to maintain in comparison with the French navy. He told me that the Emperor had often spoken to him on this subject. He remarked, also, that the Emperor had discussed with him the question whether he ought to make additional outlays for his navy and for fortifications to meet the preparations going on in England, and that he (the Emperor) had dismissed the subject with the observation, 'Let them (the English) go on with their expenditure; they will find out the uselessness of their policy by and by. In the meantime,

1861.
Æt. 57.

I don't know that it does us any harm.' The Minister of Marine told me that Lord Cowley had complained to him that he had given the particulars of the amount of the French naval force to Mr. Lindsay, and not to him; the Minister replied that it was useless to give such particulars to the English Government, as they were only misconstrued and misrepresented."

On May 16, Cobden left Paris for England. The directors of the railway placed a carriage gratuitously at his disposal to Dieppe. A public meeting had been held at Dover, at which a resolution of welcome had been passed, to be presented to him on landing. But he went from Dieppe, not to Dover, but to Newhaven, whence he proceeded to the old home (May 18) under the Sussex Downs, having seen the manners of many men and many cities, and having done a good and difficult stroke of work for two great countries.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE AMERICAN WAR—FORTIFICATION SCHEMES—INTERNATIONAL LAW

1861. ÆT. 57.

In one of his last letters before leaving Algiers, Cobden had written to Mr. Hargreaves in rather a depressed vein. "The truth must be told," he said; "though one does not like publicly to shelve oneself—my work is nearly done. I am nearly fifty-seven and not, like you, of a long-lived family. Since I passed my meridian a few years ago, I have found my powers sensibly waning and particularly those organs of the voice which I exercised so rudely whilst in their prime, and which were naturally but a weak inheritance from my father. If, however, I could pass the remainder of my days with only the labour of an average person of my years, I could, I dare say, nurse myself into a good old age. The question is whether I ought rather to content myself with a briefer span and the satisfaction of trying to do something a little beyond my strength? It is a nice question for casuists, for the home duties affecting one's young children intrude."

When Cobden returned to England his public position had more than recovered the authority and renown which had been seriously impaired by his unpopular attitude on the Russian War, and his devotion to the thankless questions of Retrenchment

and Peace. It was felt that the reproach of sentimental statesmanship could not well be applied to a man who had conducted so tough and laborious an undertaking as the negotiation of a tariff. The commercial class were compelled to forgive what they called his crotchets, to one who had opened for them new channels of wealth. The Lord Mayor entertained him at a banquet. In the House of Commons he received a hearty welcome, but a short speech on the repeal of the Paper Duty was his only contribution to its proceedings before the end of the session. He had never even in the darkest times lost the ear of this assembly. It seldom refuses to listen to anybody who can furnish it in moderately few words with aptly chosen fact, or substantial and unsophisticated argument. Everybody understood that neither he nor Mr. Bright took up a question for the sake of having a question. Their subjects were put into their minds by actual circumstances from without. Their habit, as I think that Cobden himself said, was only to step out and join the debate when they saw that it was passing their door. It was always known that whenever Cobden spoke, he really sought to have something done or left undone. A speech with him was a means of accomplishing something, and always referred to practical performance of some kind. "You know, gentlemen, I never perorate," he sometimes said to great meetings of his constituents, "and when I have done, I leave off, and sit down." This abstinence was in itself an enormous recommendation. Then as a debater, so fine a judge as Mr. Disraeli pronounced Cobden to have few equals; as a logician, he described him as close and compact, adroit, acute, and even subtle. Even the politicians who most disliked what one of them called Boanerges-Liberalism,

1861. ÆT. 57.

1861. found nothing to offend them in a man who was never either declamatory or passionate; and who never lost sight of the sympathies of those whom he addressed.[1]

Æt. 57.

Before the year was over, events came to pass which once more brought Cobden, and perhaps in a still greater degree Mr. Bright, into an almost angrier conflict than before with the same classes and interests with whom they had been in strife from the first. The great civil war broke out between the Northern and the Southern States of the American Union. England, according to its peculiar custom, was quickly divided into two vehemently opposed camps. Once more Cobden found himself in antagonism to Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, the *Times* newspaper, and all the other representatives of

[1] Mr. George Hope, the well-known tenant-farmer (of Fenton Barns), gives an account in one of his letters of the way in which Cobden used to be received in the House :—

"Mr. Cobden drove us to the House of Commons, as there was a morning sitting, and, having put us into the Speaker's gallery, took his place in the House. The business was the County Courts Bill. The Solicitor-General spoke long and well, but had to give in as to who should practise before these Courts. He (the Solicitor-General) wished to confine it to attorneys and barristers, one of each. After several others spoke, most of them in the midst of much noise, Mr. Cobden rose; at once you might have heard a pin fall, and in a very few sentences he put the matter in a true light. He said . . . that there was to be no monopoly, that the suitor might employ nobody or anybody he pleased, and there was tremendous cheering. Afterwards Mr. Cobden spoke again, and with the same effect. After a vast deal of talk, strangers were ordered to withdraw, but no division took place, as the Government gave in, and Mr. Cobden came to us rejoicing in his victory. He took us to the House of Lords (where we saw the Lord Chancellor and some others), and to see the proceedings before a Committee of the House of Commons. With Mr. Smith, the Member for Dunfermline, we went over all the New Houses of Parliament. We met with large numbers of Members, who attributed to Mr. Cobden the victory gained." — *Memoir*, p. 185.

the aristocratic classes, and those who imitate and feel with these classes. 1861. ÆT. 57.

As his correspondence shows, Cobden did not at first seize the true significance of the struggle. There were reasons why he should be slow to take the side of the North. One of them was that he could not for a time bear to face the prospect that the community which had hitherto been the realization on so great a scale of his pacific ideals, should after all plunge into war just as a monarchy or an oligarchy might have done. The North, by refusing to allow the South to secede, seemed to him at first to be the author of the strife. Another reason why his sympathies wavered was that though the Southerners were slave-holders, their interests made them Free Traders. As we have seen more than once, Cobden was always prone to be led by his sympathies as an economist. The hesitation, however, did not last long. He tolerably soon came round to a more correct view of the issues at stake, partly under the influence of Mr. Bright, whose sagacity, sharpened by his religious hatred of slavery, at once perceived that a break-up of the American Union would be a damaging blow to the cause of freedom all over the world. At the beginning of the struggle, they happened to meet Mr. Motley at breakfast. With a good deal of liveliness Cobden attacked something which Mr. Motley had been writing in the newspapers in favour of the Northern case. As they walked away down Piccadilly together, Mr. Bright remonstrated with Cobden on these symptoms of a leaning towards the South. The argument was continued and renewed as other arguments had been between them. The time came for Cobden to address his constituents at Rochdale. "Now," said Mr. Bright, with a final push of insistence, "this is

1862. — ÆT. 58.

the moment for you to speak with a clear voice." Cobden's vision by this time was no longer disturbed by economic or other prepossessions, and he was henceforth as generally identified as Mr. Bright with support of the Northern cause.

The interest in the conflict soon took a practical turn. The circumstances of the war very speedily raised great questions connected with the maritime rights of belligerents and neutrals, and Cobden threw himself energetically into a discussion which was of vital importance to Great Britain. His activity between the date of the Commercial Treaty and the time of his death was principally directed to two objects: the improvement of international law as it affects commerce in time of war, and the limitation of expenditure upon unneeded schemes of national defence. The first and more important of these subjects had been brought into a conspicuous place for public discussion by the Declaration of Paris in 1856. Free ships were then declared to make free goods. The merchants of a nation in a state of war were to be free to carry on their trade as usual, provided that they should send their goods in the ships of neutral Powers. Cobden carried this favour to neutrals a great deal further, and he explained his position in a carefully reasoned letter to Mr. Ashworth, then the chairman of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce (April 10, 1862).[1] Not only, he contended, ought all private property, that of enemies no less than that of neutrals, to be exempt from capture at sea, but neutral ships ought to be exempt from right of visitation and search, and, most important of all, the commercial ports of an enemy

[1] Published in his *Collected Writings*, ii. pp. 5-22. The three changes which he there proposes are those enumerated in the letter to Mr. Paulton, below, p. 391.

ought to be exempt from blockade. Cobden's defence of this transformation of what he called the old barbarous code of international maritime law, rested not merely on the claims of natural justice, but on the special requirements of our own country. A population circumstanced as ours is in respect both of its food and of the raw materials of its industry, is interested beyond all others in removing every regulation which interferes with the free circulation of the necessaries of life, whether in time of peace or war. Why should we persist, he asked, in upholding a belligerent right which we have always shrunk from enforcing, and shall never rigorously apply, by which we place in the hands of other belligerents the power at any moment of depriving a large part of our population of the supply of the raw materials of their industry and of the necessaries of life? The Cotton Famine in Lancashire, caused by the blockade of the Southern ports of the United States, gave to these views a painful appositeness, and Cobden pressed the arguments of his letter to Mr. Ashworth still more forcibly and with a greater breadth of illustration in an address to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in the autumn of the same year.[1]

1862. ÆT. 58.

In the course of 1862, Cobden made one of his most determined and systematic onslaughts upon Lord Palmerston's policy of national defence. He carried on very effective skirmishing during the session, until at the close of it (Aug. 1), as an eye-witness describes it, they engaged in a regular single combat.[2] The House was thin, the conclusion was

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 279, Oct. 25, 1862.

[2] "There they stood," said Mr. Grant Duff, "unreconciled and irreconcilable—the representatives of two widely different epochs, and of two widely different types of English life. The one trained in the elegant but superficial culture which was usual among the young men of his position in life at the beginning of this century,

1862. ÆT. 58.

foregone, and no effect followed from Cobden's undaunted perseverance. Perhaps more was done by a pamphlet which he published earlier in the same year, *The Three Panics*, a strenuous and humiliating narrative of the incoherent alarms of invasion which had seized successive Governments in 1848, in 1853, and in 1862.[1] Mr. Gladstone thought that the narrative laid more than the full share of blame upon Governments and Parliament, and that it was unjust to let the general public go scot-free. He told Cobden a story of a large farmer whom he had canvassed in the general election of 1857. He exclaimed to the farmer against the amount of the military and naval charges. "Well, sir," the voter said, "we want to be defended"; and no impression was to be made upon him. In truth, as Mr. Gladstone put it, there was a residuum of excitement standing over from the Russian war which had nourished all the subsequent alarm. Nor was it to be denied, either, that the world had become more volcanic since the days to which Cobden referred. It was in vain that he quoted Peel's excellent practical maxim, that in time of peace "you must consent to incur some risk" (see above, p. 38).

full of pluck, full of intelligence, but disinclined, alike by the character of his mind and by the habit of official life from indulging in political speculation, or pursuing long trains of thought; yet yielding to no man in application, in the quickness of his judgment, in knowledge of a statesman's business, and in the power of enlisting the support of what has been truly called 'that floating mass which in all countries and all time has always decided all questions.' The other derived from nature finer powers of mind, but many years passed away before he could employ his great abilities in a field sufficiently wide for them. There he stood, an admirable representative of the best section of the class to which he belongs, full of large and philanthropic hopes, and full of confidence in his power to realize them," etc. Mr. Grant Duff's *Elgin Speeches*, p. 25.—See his *Speeches*, ii. 257.

[1] *Collected Writings*, vol. ii.

1862.
ÆT. 58.

There was one risk which statesmen and the public saw closer at hand, and which they were bent on not incurring if they could help it, and that was risk from the possible necessities of the French Emperor. On the special issues, therefore, between himself and Lord Palmerston, such as the Fortification Scheme, Cobden made little way in opinion. What he did was certainly to moderate what Mr. Gladstone called "the spirit of expenditure," and this according to him was more objectionable and more dangerous than the expenditure itself.[1]

[1] The case against Cobden's view was well put in a letter addressed to him by Lord John Russell :—

"PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 2, 1861.

"MY DEAR MR. COBDEN—The question you raise in your letter to me of the 22nd March is a very serious one, and so we must both consider it.

"Lord Palmerston, it appears from the *Times*, has said that the policy of France has been for a length of time to get up a navy which shall be equal if not superior to our own. Lord Palmerston does not complain of this policy, but he says that to deny it is to shut our eyes against notorious facts, and he defends a policy which is meant to provide for our own security against this notorious policy of France. As to the facts, I do not pretend to enter into details of rival navy estimates, but I will mention what is notorious. It is notorious that two or three years ago France had a number of line-of-battle ships exceeding by one that in the British navy. It is notorious that France is now building a number of iron-cased ships more or less rapidly, exceeding that which we are building. It is notorious that having these ships she has between 30,000 and 40,000 seamen, inscribed in a register, whom she can add to her present number of sailors, which exceeds 33,000. Such being the state of facts, I will mention to you that two years ago I stated to the Count de Persigny, then Ambassador of France, that our maritime strength was essential to our existence as a nation ; that in 1817 Lord Castlereagh had stated to a Select Committee that Great Britain ought to have a navy equal to the two strongest navies in the world, that the nation had accepted this dictum as a practical maxim always to be kept in view.

"Acting on these general views, we do not care whether France has or not 400,000 soldiers in arms, with 200,000 more ready drilled and capable of joining their colours in a fortnight, but we

1862. ÆT. 58.

He deplored the absence from the scene of his steadfast ally, but Mr. Bright remained at Rochdale. He told Cobden how he admired his courage and perseverance, but he could not imitate it. For the moment he acknowledged himself beaten. The fates were against them in the shape of the ignorance and flunkeyism of the middle classes. After the final battle in August, Mr. Bright wrote to him that he had maintained the struggle most manfully. "I have never," he said, "read speeches with more

do care when we see her cherishing, nursing, and increasing her naval forces. We therefore endeavour to provide a navy adequate to maintain our character, our position, and our safety. We are willing to stake our existence as a Ministry on the grant of the number of men for the navy we have asked for. I am aware that the expense is great, the burden is irksome, and that the French are irritated by our obstinacy in being determined to defend ourselves. But all these considerations yield to the paramount consideration of national security.

"Upon this ground whenever you raise the question we shall be ready to stand.

"Allow me before I close to ask you to reflect on the suggestions which are made to you and Mr. Lindsay, and not to Lord Cowley, Col. Claremont, and Commander Hore, by the French Ministers. These suggestions appear to me to betoken a desire on the part of France to raise in Parliament an opposition to armaments of a defensive character, in order to ensure French supremacy. This policy would not be unnatural, nor would it be new. Lord Macaulay, in giving an account of the instructions of Lewis to his Ambassador, Count Tallard, when he came to England after the peace of Ryswick, says, 'In the original draft of the instructions was a curious paragraph which, on second thoughts, it was determined to omit. The Ambassador was directed to take proper opportunities of cautioning the English against a standing army as the only thing which could really be fatal to their laws and liberties.'

"We are very glad to enter with the French into improved commercial relations, and very grateful to you for your labours in this direction. But when they advise us against arming for our defence, while they do not 'bate a jot of their preparations military and naval, the instinct of the British nation distrusts the friendship which appears in so suspicious a guise.

"I remain, yours very faithfully,

"J. RUSSELL."

1861. ÆT. 57.

pleasure than these in which you have attempted to destroy the most shameless imposture of our time. But speeches will hardly do it. Since 1854 the public have been so thoroughly demoralized that they have become literally helpless, and I can scarcely conceive of an event sufficiently insulting and alarming to them to excite them to any positive and united action. The working men have no leaders of their own class, and they have no faith in any others. I wait, therefore, for some accident to bring about a change. Possibly Palmerston's final fall, which cannot be long postponed, may act as an awakener throughout the country. Still I think your speeches are preparing the way for some discoveries on the part of our dim-seeing people." This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. Liberalism remained stationary until Lord Palmerston's death, and it was not long after that event that the great awakening took place which landed Mr. Gladstone in power, with Mr. Bright himself for the most popular and influential of his colleagues.

Cobden's correspondence during these final years touches other topics, but the fortunes of the war in America, international maritime law, and national expenditure were the subjects which now filled the largest space both in his thoughts and in his public addresses.

To Mr. W. S. Lindsay

Maritime Law.

"*April* 26, 1861.—In your letter upon maritime law in time of war, you shirk the pinching point of the whole question, by omitting allusion to the fact that we gave up our old belligerent rights over neutrals, *not from choice but from necessity.* It was

1861. ÆT. 57.

the attitude of the United States at the outbreak of the Russian war which induced us to suspend those 'rights' of search and seizure, the enforcement of which led to our last war with America. And we yielded up permanently those rights at the Paris Congress from the same motives, namely, deference to the attitude of the United States, though no American plenipotentiary was present. In fact, as you know, all the modifications in our old arbitrary navigation code had their origin in the rising power of the United States as a maritime people.

"Looked at in this light, the question is much more simple than you assume it to be, for you put the alternative of going back to the state of things before the Paris Congress, as though the consent of England to that Congress were a voluntary choice and not an inevitable necessity. Viewed in this manner, there cannot be a doubt in any sane mind that it is our interest to go on even to the extent stipulated for by President Buchanan in his late letter on the subject. With the European law as it now stands, it merely offers the carrying trade to the United States in case of a war between England and any other maritime state sufficiently powerful to keep a few fast steamers at sea. Anybody who opposes your proposal to put England and America on the same footing in case of war, does not understand our present situation.

"*P.S.*—The peace-at-any-price party (if there be one) are not so much interested as the war people in putting us on a par with the United States in case of hostilities with a maritime power; for in the present state of things a war with France, whatever might be the ultimate result, must involve tenfold sacrifices to England, as compared with what would be the case if your plan were acceded to. In fact, if France

1861.
ÆT. 57.

could keep a few swift steam corvettes at sea, to raise our sea insurance at Lloyd's 10 per cent, our ships would have to transfer their registry to the United States or to rot in our ports. It is evident that the knowledge of these facts must weigh with our statesmen to prevent them from embarking in a war with France. In so far it plays the game of the peace-at-any-price party, but at the risk of national humiliation."

"*July* 27, 1861.—I have read the debates on the iron-cased ships in the *Times*. It is important only so far as it elicited a most able and statesmanlike speech from Disraeli, which will bear fruits.[1] . . . You were wrong in throwing overboard your Paris authority, and giving in your adhesion to the Secretary of the Admiralty. There was no necessity to contradict him until you had the *disproofs*. But I would have waited for the answer from the other side. My maxim has been to distrust the Treasury Bench at all times, and never admit myself wrong in a controversy with the Government, until I have better evidence than their assertions. Old Saddle-

[1] The subject of the discussion was the naval competition between England and France. Mr. Disraeli's point was that there could be no reason why the two Governments should not come to an understanding as to the relative proportion of the naval forces to be maintained by the two Powers; and that if the march of science compelled fresh efforts to establish adequate naval forces, the leading statesmen of each country ought at least to do all in their power to enlighten the public as to the true meaning of what was going on. Lord Palmerston, instead of laying stress on the revolution in naval affairs, always left people to suppose that an insane competition for supremacy at sea was going on between two rival nations. (*Hansard*, clxiv. 1678.) This was only one of several admirable speeches made by Mr. Disraeli at this time, which justified Cobden's preference of him over Lord Palmerston. But Mr. Disraeli in power thirteen years afterwards adopted Palmerston's policy and his vices in the Levant, in India, and in South Africa.

1861. Æt. 57.

tree's example in the *Heart of Midlothian* is worth remembering. When hard pressed by an opponent in an argument, who asked, 'There, can ye deny that, Master Saddletree?' he replied, 'No: but I'm not going to admit it, neither.'"

To Mr. Hargreaves

British Policy in China.

"—— 1861.—You will have seen that these articles generally, especially those in the *Times*, lay all the blame of their wars on our commercial classes, and the cost thus entailed on the country is made a grievance on the part of the aristocratic and propertied classes, on account of the taxation which they bring on the country. So far as the charge against our merchants is concerned, I am afraid that many of the residents in China, especially the younger and less experienced of their number, as well as those engaged in the opium trade whether old or young, have often been active promoters of hostilities with that empire. As a rule the Chinese are not a people who attract much sympathy from those who live among them. How could it be otherwise, when they feel no sympathy for others? 'Like begets like.' But it is very short-sighted and unphilosophical conduct to try to cure this ungenial characteristic of a people by violence and injustice, which can only increase the feeling of alienation and repugnance. Yet this is the receipt invariably prescribed in our intercourse with the Chinese as a cure for their insolence, by the *young merchants*; for Sir George Bonham, the former Governor of Hong-Kong, draws a distinction between the conduct of the old and substantial houses and the

younger residents; the latter are always for 'pitching into the Celestials' by way of making them more civil. By the way, I am afraid the prospect of a sudden increase of trade, which always follows a war expenditure *for a time*, is not without its influence on these young houses, to say nothing of the enormous profits which have been made out of the claims for compensation for losses of property incurred during the war. Now none of these motives can have any sway with the merchants and manufacturers of Lancashire, who are the parties principally interested in a permanent trade with China. All they can desire is that the duties shall be moderate, the trade regular, and that facilities shall be afforded at the ports of entry for the quick despatch of business. All these conditions exist in China to as great an extent as in any other considerable maritime states. Indeed, comparing our trade with China with that with our own possessions in India, it seems likely that the duties payable in the former will soon be the lighter of the two! Now all this leads me to press on you and the other members of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to take some step for the protection of your interests against the risk of future collisions and wars in that country. The only way of accomplishing this is by discouraging the British Government from entering into closer diplomatic relations, or forcing on that country a resident Ambassador at Pekin, or seeking for free access for our countrymen to the interior of that empire. The last is a very plausible but most perilous situation. The idea of Englishmen 'opening up a trade' in the interior of China commends itself strongly to those who do not know how commerce is carried on. But any one acquainted with the trade of Russia or other countries in a low state of

1861. ÆT. 57.

1861. civilization, and speaking a peculiar and difficult language, knows that it is impossible for foreigners to carry on the interior trade of those countries. It must all be left to natives. There is a proposal for carrying our productions in English ships up the great arterial river of that country into the interior. Now this would be totally at variance with all international law, unless the trade were confined to some one or more ports of entry to be agreed upon. But once let an English trading steamer find itself 500 or 1000 miles in the interior of China, and how could you hope to prevent irregular trade taking place, to be followed by constant collisions with local authorities, who would, no doubt, be exposed to a system of bribery by which the smuggler would only supersede the regular trader at the ports? Even the stipulation for foreigners to be allowed to penetrate into the country by means of passports is, in my opinion, a policy of very doubtful wisdom. Missionaries will then, no doubt, avail themselves of the facility for travelling in safety into the country. I have the most profound veneration for those who, like St. Paul, preach the Gospel at their own risk, trusting for their safety solely to the purity of their motives and the overruling protection of God. But it is different when a missionary goes forth with all the force of a powerful Government at his back; in such a case he is likely to do far more injury than service to the cause of Christianity. The present war, so far as the French are concerned, arose out of the alleged murder of a Roman Catholic priest in China; and if missionaries are to travel through that country with passports, it will, I fear, lead to as many wars as conversions. There is another point to be considered. Our cruisers on the coast of China are frequently capturing or destroying junks,

ÆT. 57.

1861.
Æt. 57.

on the plea that they are pirates. There is a bad practice of paying head-money for these pirates, taken or destroyed. I think there is a wanton destruction of life sometimes committed without sufficient proof of the character of the parties. In my opinion we ought not to undertake to perform the duties of police on the coast, *unless to protect our own vessels*, or at least those of European origin. In this respect we ought to follow the example of United States cruisers—watch over the security of national property, leave the Chinese to protect their own shipping. The truth is, our opium smugglers and our wars with the Government of China lead to a state of carelessness on the coast, and we then step in to preserve the peace in Chinese waters, in consequence of the impotence of the authorities to perform the duties of police."

To M. Chevalier

On Lord Brougham.

"*Midhurst, August* 21, 1861.—I have read with much pleasure your address to the Social Science Meeting at Dublin. If you have a corrected copy in French, let me have one. I was amused at your diplomacy in comparing Brougham to Cicero. This must have delighted him. He has, I suspect, always had the great Roman in his eye, and has sought to imitate him in the universality of his accomplishments. But it was one thing to be universal 1900 years ago, and is another thing now. A Bolton mechanic who makes a steam engine, or one who drives a locomotive on our railways, knows more in his special calling than either Cicero or Brougham. It is this attempt at universality which has been the

1861. Æt. 57.

great error and failing of Lord B.'s public life. He has touched everything and finished nothing. Had he given his vast powers to one thing at a time, he might have codified our laws, and endowed every village with a good school, besides leaving nothing for me to do in Free Trade. But he made a speech for five hours on Law Reform forty years ago nearly, and another as long on National Education, and then he left those questions for something else. The result will be that in fifty years he will be remembered only for his herculean mental powers, and his unrivalled intellectual industry, but his name will not be specially associated with any reforms for which posterity will hold him in grateful remembrance."[1]

To S. Lucas

Inconvenience of a Sectarian Organ.

"*Midhurst, October* 17, 1861.—I said in one of my notes to you that the *Star* should not appear the organ of a sect. I will give you an illustration *à propos* of this remark. In an otherwise excellent and tolerant article on Lord John yesterday, you bring in Bright and myself at the close to sting him by our contrast. This is the kind of remark which stamps your paper as the organ of a strait sect which tolerates nothing but what comes from your own

[1] Brougham, as has been seen, had been very unfriendly to the League (see vol. i. p. 281). For many years there was no communication between him and Mr. Bright. With Cobden he kept up an occasional correspondence, and in 1856, when Mr. Bright was ill, Brougham, says Cobden in a letter of that date, "wrote to me speaking in the most affectionate terms of Bright, and offering him the use of his house at Cannes. I sent the letter to Bright, who of course met his advances with open arms, and they have been exchanging great civilities. He seems anxious to heal all his ancient enmities. Could a better use be made of his declining years?"—*To G. Moffatt*, June 4, 1856.

preachers. You remember the anecdote I gave you of a person I travelled with in the railway carriage from Guildford to London, when he bought the *Telegraph* and I the *Star*. He remarked, 'I don't like the *Star*, it is so intolerant; it never admits anybody to be right but Bright and Cobden.' I should like to make a bargain with you in the interest of your paper, not to let my name appear in your leaders (unless to find fault with me) for two years."

1861. ÆT. 57.

To W. Hargreaves, Esq.

Tocqueville on the Right of Secession.

"*June* 22, 1861.—I am glad to see that as yet there is no serious fighting in America. Until there has been a bloody collision, one may hope there will be none. I have been reading Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. In his chapter on the influence of slavery his sagacity is, as it frequently is, quite prophetic. He seems to regard it as the chief danger to the Union, less from the rival interests it creates, than from the incompatibility of manners which it produces. It is singular too that he takes the Southern view of the right of secession. He says, 'The Union was formed by the voluntary agreement of the States; and in uniting together they have not forfeited their nationality, nor have they been reduced to one and the same people. If one of the States chose to withdraw its name from the contract, it would be difficult to disprove its right of doing so; and the Federal Government would have no means of maintaining its claims either by force or by right.' He then goes on to argue that among States united by the Federal tie there may be some which have a great interest in maintaining the Union on which

1861. ÆT. 57. their prosperity depends; and he then remarks—'Great things may then be done in the name of the Federal Government, but in reality that Government will have ceased to exist.' Has he not accurately anticipated both the fact and the motive of the present attitude of the State of New York? Is it not commercial gain and mercantile ascendancy which prompt their warlike zeal for the Federal Government? At all events, it is a little unreasonable in the New York politicians to require *us* to treat the South as rebels, in the face of the opinion of our highest European authority as to the right of secession."

To Lieut.-Col. Fitzmayer

The *Trent* Affair.

"*Midhurst, Dec.* 3, 1861.— . . . In reference to our latest complication with the United States, it is, I hope, possible the Government at Washington may disavow the act of their officer.[1] If not, it will, I expect, be nothing more than a diplomatic and legal wrangle. I think, however, the American Government are very foolish to take such a course. I confess I have not much opinion of Seward. He is a kind of American Thiers or Palmerston or Russell—and talks to Bunkum. Fortunately, my friend Mr. Charles Sumner, who is Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and has

[1] Messrs. Slidell and Mason, two Commissioners from the Confederate States to Europe, were passengers on board the West India mail steamer *Trent*. Captain Wilkes, of the United States war-vessel *San Jacinto*, stopped the *Trent* by firing a shot across her bows, took the Commissioners forcibly out of her, and sailed away with them (Nov. 8). After an interchange of correspondence between Lord Russell and Mr. Seward, and the despatch of British troops to Halifax, the men were given up, and reached England on January 29. (See Irving's *Annals*, p. 614.)

1861.

Æt. 57.

really a kind of veto on the acts of Seward, is a very peaceable and safe man.

"I look upon it as quite impossible that the North in addition to their life and death struggle at home can desire a rupture with this country. It is to assume that they are mad. Doubtless there are plenty of Irish and plenty of Southern sympathizers in the Northern States, who would be delighted with a war with England. But ninety-nine-hundredths of the honest citizens of the North must above all things desire to avoid a quarrel with us at the present moment, and they will I fear only interpret our accusation of a contrary design as a proof that we wish to pick a quarrel with them.

"Nothing is more clear to me than that the world is underrating in this struggle the power of the North. I have paid two visits to that country at an interval of twenty-four years between the first and second trip. I do not believe anybody without two such visits can form an idea of the power and resources and the rapid town growth of that people. As for the Slave States, I look upon them as doomed in any case to decay and almost barbarism. If Christianity is to survive, there can be no future for slavery. But those Free States where slavery is prohibited will in all human probability contain more than one hundred millions of people in the lifetime of persons now born. Is it wise with us who have an India, as they have their slaves, to give cause to that great future nation to remember with feelings of hatred and revenge our successors to remote generations? Ought not we most carefully and generously to guard ourselves against the possibility of being shown hereafter to have taken advantage of the North in the hour of its trial?

"Upon the whole I do not complain of our

1861. Æt. 57.

Government, nor do I think the Americans can fairly charge us as a nation with having failed to bear with fortitude and temper the great suffering the civil war has inflicted on our cotton trade. It is true we have our *Times* as the Americans have their *Herald*, and the twin incendiaries may pair off together."

"*Midhurst, Dec.* 6, 1861. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—Your admirable address cannot fail to do good.[1] But it is a mad world we live in! Here am I in the midst of extracts from Hansard, etc., to show up the folly or worse of the men who have been putting us to millions of expense to protect us from a *coup de main* from France, and now we see the same people willing to rush into war with America, and leave us exposed to this crafty and dangerous neighbour! Might we not be justified in turning hermits, letting our beards grow, and returning to our caves! . . .

"Has it occurred to you that this war is now nearly a year old, and the South has rather gained than receded on the Potomac, having stopped the navigation to the Federal capital? How long will foreign powers look on if nothing decisive be done? I doubt whether another year's blockade will be borne by the world. What say you? If you agree, you should let Sumner know. My own conviction is that if there is to be no early compromise and settlement between North and South, and if the North do not voluntarily raise the blockade, there will next year be an intervention in some shape. A Bordeaux merchant came here to me a few days ago. He says the export of wine and spirits from that port to New Orleans was 30,000 tuns per annum, which is cut off to a gallon. He says also that their trade in liquors

[1] Mr. Bright spoke on the *Trent* Affair and on the American War generally, at Rochdale, December 4, 1861.—*Speeches*, i. 167.

1862.
ÆT. 58.

and fruits with New York, etc., is nearly destroyed by the Morrill tariff. He tells me the feeling is very bitter in France, and that the Emperor would be supported if he were to join England in breaking up the blockade. France has a far greater stake in the *export* trade to the South than England, owing to her old connexion with New Orleans."

"*Midhurst, Dec.* 14, 1861. (*To M. Chevalier.*)—There is considerable reaction in the public mind, I think, on the American question. Some large public meetings have passed resolutions in favour of arbitration; and the religious congregations have been also making demonstrations for peace. I expect the Americans will propose either to restore the *status quo*, and let the United States Admiralty Courts decide, or else refer to arbitration. I hope the Emperor will offer his mediation if an opportunity occurs. Neither party will be in the humour to refuse. It is high time that we had a revision of these so-called international maritime laws. They are merely traps laid for nations to fall into wars. I do not believe in a war. Palmerston likes to drive the wheel close to the edge, and show how dexterously he can avoid falling over the precipice. Meantime he keeps people's attention employed, which suits him politically. But I hope this game is nearly played out. I am quite sick of it."

"*January* 1862. (*To Mr. Paulton.*)—Palmerston ought to be turned out for the reckless expense to which he has put us. He and his colleagues knew there could be no war. From the moment they were informed of the course France, Prussia, and Austria were taking in giving us their moral support (and they knew this early in December), a war was, as they knew, impossible. Then came Seward's despatch to Adams on the 19th December, which virtually settled

1861. ÆT. 57.

the matter. To keep alive the wicked passions in this country as Palmerston and his *Post* did, was like the man, and that is the worst that can be said of it.

"I can't see my way through the American business. I don't believe the North and South can ever lie in the same bed again. Nor do I see how the military operations can be carried into the South, so as to inflict a crushing defeat. Unless something of the kind takes place, I predict that Europe will recognize the independence of the South. I tell Sumner this, and tell him that his only chance if he wants time to fight it out, is to raise the blockade of the Mississippi voluntarily, and then Europe might look on.

"But our friend Bright will not hear of anything against the claims of the North. I admire his pluck, for when he goes with a side it is always to win. I tell him that it is possible to wish well to a cause without being sure that it will be successful. However, he will soon find in the House that we shall be on this question as we were on China, Crimean, and Greek Pacifico wars, quite in a minority! There is no harm in that if you are right, but it is useless to deceive ourselves about the issue. Three-fourths of the House will be glad to find an excuse for voting for the dismemberment of the great Republic."

"*Nov.* 29, 1861. (*To Mr. Charles Sumner.*)—I hear that the law officers of the Crown have decided that you are not within the law in what has been done. I leave your lawyers to answer ours. The question of legality in matters of international law has never been very easily settled. However, the only danger to the peace of the two countries is in the temper which may grow out of this very trivial incident. The Press will, as usual, try to envenom the affair. It is for us and all who care for the interests of humanity, to do our utmost to thwart

1861. Æt. 57.

these mischief-makers. You may reckon on Bright, myself, and all our friends being alert and active in this good work, and we reckon on the co-operation of yourself and all who sympathize with you. Though I said in my other letter that I shall never care to utter a word about the merits of a war after it has begun, I do not the less feel it my duty to try to prevent hostilities occurring. Let me here remark that I cannot understand how you should have thought it worth your while at Washington to have reopened this question of the right of search, by claiming to exercise it in a doubtful case and a doubtful manner, under circumstances which could be of so little advantage, and to have incurred the risk of greater disadvantages. The capture of Mason and Slidell can have little effect in discouraging the South, compared with the indirect encouragement and hope it may hold out to them of embroiling your Government with England. I am speaking with reference to the policy, and leaving out of sight the law of the case. But in the latter view we are rather unprepared to find you exercising in a strained manner the right of search, inasmuch as you have been supposed to be always the opponents of the practice. I was under the impression that our Government was told pretty plainly at the outbreak of the Crimean War that it would be risking the peace of this country with yours if we claimed the right of search in the open sea. I am not in a position to know how far this was the case. Can you tell me if there be any documents on the subject? If it were so, we should, of course, all unite in holding you to your own doctrine.

"*P.S.*—Since writing the accompanying, we have the details of the capture of Mason and Slidell in our packet vessel. You may be right in point of law, though, perhaps, in technical strictness, the lawyers

1861. ÆT. 57.

may pick a hole. *But I am satisfied you are wrong in point of policy.* There is an impression, I know, in high quarters here, that Mr. Seward wishes to quarrel with this country. This seems absurd enough. I confess I have as little confidence in him as I have in Lord Palmerston. Both will consult Bunkum for the moment, without much regard, I fear, for the future. You must not lose sight of this view of the relations of the two countries. Formerly England feared a war with the United States as much from the dependence on your cotton as from a dread of your power. *Now* the popular opinion (however erroneous) is that a war would give us cotton. And we, of course, consider your power weakened by your civil war. I speak as a friend of peace, and not as a partisan of my own country, in wishing you to bear this in mind."

"*Dec.* 6, 1861.—Since writing my letter of yesterday's date, I have read General Scott's admirable letter. It contains a passage to the following effect: 'I am sure that the President and people of the United States would be but too happy to let these men go free, unnatural and unpardonable as their offences have been, if by it they could emancipate the commerce of the world. Greatly as it would be to our disadvantage at this present crisis to surrender any of those maritime privileges of belligerents which are sanctioned by the laws of nations, I feel that I take no responsibility in saying that the United States will be faithful to her traditional policy upon this subject, and to the spirit of her political institutions.'"

"*Dec.* 12, 1861.—The *Times* and its yelping imitators are still doing their worst, but there is a powerful moderate party. I hope you will offer promptly to arbitrate the question. There is one point on which you must absolutely define your

platform. You must acknowledge the South as belligerents to give you a standing-ground on the *Trent* affair. Some of your newspapers argue that you have a right to carry off a *rebel* from an English vessel, which means that Austria might have seized Kossuth under similar circumstances. Were you to take such ground, there would be war." 1861. ÆT. 57.

"*Dec.* 19, 1861.—Everybody tells me that war is inevitable, and yet I do not believe in war. But it must be admitted that there are things said and done on your side that make it very difficult for the advocates of peace on this side to keep the field. We can get over the sayings of your *Herald* that 'France will not and England *dare* not go to war.' Your newspapers will not drive us into war. But when grave men (or men that should be grave), holding the highest posts in your cultivated State of Massachusetts, compliment Captain Wilkes for having given an affront to the British lion, it makes it very hard for Bright and me to contend against the 'British lion party' in this country. All I can say is that I hope you have taken Bright's advice, and offered unconditional arbitration. With that offer publicly made, the friends of peace could prevent our fire-eaters from assaulting you, always providing that your public speakers do not put it out of our power to keep the peace. I was sorry to see a report of an anti-English speech by your colleague at New York. Honestly speaking, and with no blind patriotism to mislead me, I don't think the nation here behaved badly under the terrible evil of loss of trade and danger of starving under your blockade. Of course all privileged classes and aristocracies hate your institutions—that is natural enough; but the mass of the people never went with the South. I am not pleased with

1862. ÆT. 58.

your project of sinking stones to block up ports. That is barbarism. It is quite natural that, smarting as you do under an unprovoked aggression from the slave-owners, you should even be willing to smother them like hornets in their nest. But don't forget the outside world, and especially don't forget that the millions in Europe are more interested even than their princes in preserving the future commerce with the vast region of the Confederate States."

"*Jan.* 23, 1862.—It is, perhaps, well that you settled the matter of sending away the men at once. Consistently with your own principles, you could not have justified their detention. But it is right you should know that there was a great reaction going on through this country against the diabolical tone of the *Times* and *Post*. (I suspect stock-jobbing in these quarters.) The cry of arbitration had been raised and responded to, and I was glad to see the religious people once more in the field in favour of peace. Be assured if you had offered to refer the question to arbitration, there could not have been a meeting called in England that would not have endorsed it. The only question was whether we ought to be the first to offer arbitration. I mean this was the only doubt in the popular mind. As regards our Government, they are, of course, feeling the tendency of public opinion. A friend of mine in London, a little behind the scenes, wrote to me:—'They are busy at the Foreign Office hunting up precedents for arbitration, very much against their will.' I write all this because I wish you to know that we are not quite so bad as appeared at first on the surface."

In the same letter, after arguing for the raising of the blockade by the North, he says:—

"All the reflection I have been able to give the

1862. ÆT. 58.

subject confirms me in the view I expressed in my former letter. Propose to Europe a clean sweep of the old maritime law of Vattel, Puffendorf, and Co.; abolish blockades of commercial ports on the ground laid down in Cass's despatch which you sent. Get rid of the right of search in time of war as in time of peace, and make private property exempt from capture by armed vessels of every kind, whether Government vessels or privateers. And, as an earnest of your policy, offer to apply the doctrine in your present war. You would instantly gain France and all the continent of Europe to your side. You would enlist a party in England that can always control our governing class when there is a sufficient motive for action; and you would acquire such a moral position that no power would dream of laying hands on you. I think I told you that all our commercial and trading community have already pronounced in favour of exempting private property from capture by Government ships, as first proposed by Mr. Marcy. In the ensuing session of Parliament I intend to make a speech on the subject of maritime law, in which I will undertake to prove that we, above all other countries, are interested in carrying out all the above three propositions of reform. With the exception of the aristocratic classes, who have an instinctive leaning for any policy which furnishes excuses for large naval and military establishments, everybody will be favourable to the change."

To A. W. Paulton

Maritime Law.

"*Midhurst, Feb.* 2.—I hope to see you on Wednesday evening. I have an idea (about which we can talk) of occupying ground in the House upon the

1862. Æt. 58.

subject of rights of neutrals by giving notice early of something of this kind: 'That in the opinion of the House the questions affecting belligerent rights and the rights of neutrals are in an unsatisfactory state, and demand the early attention of Her Majesty's Government.'

"A Committee on Shipping in 1860 reported in favour of adopting Marcy's plan of exempting private property altogether from capture by Government ships as well as privateers, but nothing was done.

"Now, I think such a motion must be agreed to, because all parties are dissatisfied with matters as they were left at Paris in 1856. In my speech I should advocate:—

"1st. The making of private property sacred from capture by armed ships of all kinds.

"2nd. Exempting neutral ships from search or visitation in time of war as in time of peace.

"3rd. The abolition of blockade of commercial ports or coast-lines.

"I could make it clear that England is beyond all countries interested in carrying out these points.

"Have you been reading anything about International Law? If so, give me the benefit of your observations. What I shall want is standing-ground to show the absolute necessity for a change. Are there not great discrepancies between Lord John's present doctrines and our former supposed principles? For instance, I thought all our authorities, including Phillimore's last book, agreed that a belligerent could take a neutral ship *anywhere*, and carry her into port for adjudication."

To Mr. Henry Ashworth

The Commercial Class.

"*Feb.* 7, 1862.—I am quite happy to see you at the head of the Chamber of Commerce. With many

faults and shortcomings, our mercantile and manufacturing classes as represented in the Chambers of Commerce are after all the only power in the State possessed of wealth and political influence sufficient to counteract in some degree the feudal governing class of this country. They are, indeed, the only class from whom we can in our time hope for any further beneficial changes. 1862. ÆT. 58.

"It is true they are often timid and servile in their conduct towards the aristocracy, and we must wink at their weaknesses if we are to keep them political company. But there is always this encouragement to hope better things—that they have no interest opposed to the general good, whilst, on the contrary, the feudal governing class exists only by the violation of sound principles of political economy, and therefore the very institution is hostile to the interests of the masses.

"I wish we could inspire the mercantile manufacturing community with a little more self-respect. The future of England must depend on them, for, as Deacon Hume said twenty years ago, we have long passed the time when the prosperity of this country depended on its land, and yet how little share this all-important interest claims in the government of the country."

To M. Chevalier

Maritime Law in the House of Commons.

"*Feb.* 14, 1862.—I have not yet secured an evening for my motion. We have to ballot for the first chance, and there are always a good many candidates at the commencement of the session. I intend to move the resolution on the other side. If this be affirmed by the House, as I have no doubt

1862. it will be, the Government will be obliged to take some steps in the matter, and when once they begin, I defy them to stop without completing my programme.

ÆT. 58.

"*P.S.*—Mr. Cobden to move:—

That the present state of international maritime law, as affecting the rights of belligerents and neutrals, is ill-defined and unsatisfactory, and calls for the attention of Her Majesty's Government.

"But I fear it will be some weeks before I can secure an evening."

"*March* 4.—After I had given notice of my motion in the House, Mr. Horsfall, the Tory M.P. for Liverpool, complained that I was poaching on his domain, as he had announced his intention in the previous session to bring the subject of maritime law before Parliament. On referring back to the proceedings of last year, I found he was correct, and as it is a sort of etiquette in the House not to encroach on each other's territory, I yielded at once. Mr. Horsfall has adopted my exact words, and I shall second his motion. The debate stands for next Tuesday, the 11th. I am very well satisfied that Mr. Horsfall originates the motion, as it will give a better chance of success, the Tories being less likely to oppose one of their own party than me. By the way, Lindsay says he thinks there is now a majority in the House in favour of exempting private property from capture. The question respecting blockades is quite new, but with a little discussion we shall carry that point; and I am still convinced that if the Emperor will propose the three points which I quoted in a former letter, we can compel our Government very shortly to acquiesce."

"*March* 17. In all my political life I have never

1862.
ÆT. 58.

suffered a more vexatious disappointment than in being prevented from speaking last Monday. I had taken great trouble to prepare, and should have had a good opportunity of being universally read in the papers, for much attention has been called to my intention to speak. But I was seized with a sudden hoarseness arising from a cold, and on Monday was unable to articulate. The consequence was that the debate to my mind was kept to too narrow a basis. However, enough was said and admitted on all sides to prove that we cannot remain where we are, and as nobody seriously proposes to go back, it is quite clear we must go forward. I am convinced that the result will be, after the usual agitation out-of-doors, that public opinion in England will pronounce for a complete revolution in the maritime law. We have more to gain than any other people from the complete removal of all restrictions on freedom of commerce whether in time of peace or war. But we have our battle to fight as usual with our own feudal governing class. I am writing this in my bedroom, and cannot, therefore, say much. As respects the postage question, I will not lose sight of it."[1]

"*Athenæum*, *London*, *March* 18.—You will see that we are in the midst of a debate on the maritime law, and you may have remarked that Palmerston has seized the opportunity before the discussion was over to declare his opposition to the change affecting private property of belligerents at sea. I am not surprised at this; for a man of seventy-seven, whose ideas are stereotyped on the model of half a century ago, is not likely to favour any measure in harmony with

[1] The debate was resumed on March 17 by Mr. Lindsay, who began by expressing a hope that Cobden would be able to speak before the end of the evening. His hoarseness, however, remained intractable, and Mr. Bright spoke instead.

1862. ÆT. 58.

the age in which we live. But I am not the less certain that these changes in maritime law to which I alluded before, will be adopted by this country. It takes time with us English people to make up our minds, but when great material interests can be appealed to on the side of principles of freedom and humanity, the eventual result in this country is not doubtful. It is a terrible evil to find ourselves with an old man of seventy-seven at our head, and I am more and more convinced that any change from this state of things will be an advantage."

To Mr. Hargreaves

Lord Palmerston.

"*Midhurst, August* 7, 1862.—I have found your letter on coming here. If Bright could have been by my side during the last six weeks of the session, I think we could have silenced Palmerston. He had laid himself open to attack, and the events of the session had made him very vulnerable. However, I hope I have spoilt his game as a popular demagogue a little for the recess. But he has a terrible run of good luck; and then I am afraid of the tricks he may be allowed by his obsequious colleagues to play before we meet again. Nothing could be so unfavourable to the public interest as the present state of parties. Palmerston is spending many millions more than the Tories would dream of spending. He pampers the 'services' to such a degree that they draw off all opposition from Dizzy's party, so that there is no check on anything he does. There was literally no Opposition last session. Then Gladstone lends his genius to all sorts of expenditure which he disapproves, and devises schemes for

raising money which nobody else would think of. Thus he gets the funds for fortifications by a system of loans, which tends to keep the waste out of the annual accounts. If the money had to be raised out of the taxes, we could resist it. In the same spirit he goes into China wars, and keeps a Dr. and Cr. account, deluding himself and the public with the idea that these wars are at the expense of the Chinese, whereas for every million we get from that country we spend at least as much in increased cost of establishments there; and it seems more and more doubtful whether much more will be got on any terms. How we are to accomplish the change I know not, but it would be a great gain to the public if we could carry the Liberals to the Opposition side of the House. It seems as if the Tories were determined not to let *their* leaders into office. They are too well satisfied with things as they are. Well they may be!"

1862. ÆT. 58.

To M. Chevalier

Commercial Blockades.

"*August* 7, 1862.—Our Government, as you know, is constantly declaring that *we* have the greatest interest in maintaining the old system of belligerent rights. Lord Russell considers that we must preserve the right of blockade as a most valuable privilege for ourselves on some future occasion, and you will see that almost the very last words uttered by Lord Palmerston at the close of the session were to assert the great interest England had in maintaining these old belligerent rights. In fact we are governed by men whose ideas have made

1862. no progress since 1808—nay, they cling to the ideas of the Middle Ages!"

ÆT. 58.

"*Manchester, Oct.* 25, 1862.—England cannot take a step with decency or consistency, to put an end to the blockade, until our Government is prepared to give in their adhesion to the *principle* of the abolition of commercial blockades for the future. This our antiquated Palmerstons and Russells are not willing to do. They have a sincere faith in the efficacy of commercial blockades as a belligerent weapon against our enemies. They are ignorant that it is a two-edged sword, which cuts the hand that wields it—when that hand is England—more than the object which it strikes. Lords Palmerston and Russell feel bound to acquiesce in the blockade, and even to find excuses for it, because they wish to preserve the right for us of blockading some other power.

"I am against any act of violence to put an end to the war. We should not thereby obtain cotton, nor should we coerce the North. We should only intensify the animosity between the two sections. But I should be glad to see an appeal made by all Europe to the North to put an end to the blockade of the South against legitimate commerce, on the ground of humanity, accompanied with the offer of making the abolition of commercial blockades the principle of international law for the future. But this, I repeat, our own Government will not agree to at present. We have a battle to fight against our own ruling class in England to accomplish this reform. I am by no means so sure as Gladstone that the South will ever be a nation. It depends on the 'Great West.' If Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota sustain the President's anti-slavery proclamation, there will be no

peace which will leave the mouth of the Mississippi in the hands of an independent power. A few days will tell us how these elections will go." 1862. ÆT. 58.

To Lady Hatherton

The Cotton Famine.

"*Nov.* 6, 1862.—Few people can realize the appalling state of things in this neighbourhood. Imagine that the iron, stone, and coal were suddenly withheld from Staffordshire, and it gives you but an imperfect idea of what Lancashire, with its much larger population, is suffering from the want of cotton; it reverses the condition of the richest county in the kingdom, and makes it the poorest. A capitalist with £20,000 invested in buildings and machinery, may be almost on a par with his operatives in destitution, if he be deprived of the raw material which alone makes his capital productive. Bad as is the state of things, I fear we are only at its commencement, and unhappily the winter is upon us to aggravate the sufferings of the working people. The evil is spreading through all classes. The first effects will be felt on the small shopkeepers; the weak mill-owners will come next. I met a magistrate yesterday from Oldham, and he told me that at the last meeting of the Bench four thousand assessments were exempted from payment of poor rates on the plea of inability of the parties to pay! How rapidly this must aggravate the pressure on the remainder of the property of the Union! There will be another meeting of the Manchester Committee next Monday, at which it will be proposed to extend it to a *National* Committee, and the Queen will be solicited as Duchess of Lancaster to allow her name to appear

1863. ÆT. 59.

as its patron. An energetic effort will then be made to cover the whole kingdom with local committees, and then institute a general canvass for subscriptions. By this means we may keep matters in tolerable order till Parliament meets, but there is a growing opinion that we shall have to apply to Parliament for Imperial aid. People at a distance, who learn that the poor rates in Lancashire are even now less than they are in ordinary times in the agricultural districts, cannot understand this helplessness and destitution. They do not perceive how exceptional this state of things is. Lancashire, with its machinery stopped, is like a man in a fainting fit. It would be as rational to attempt to draw money from the one as blood from the other. Or it may be compared to a strong man suddenly struck with paralysis; until the use of his limbs and muscles be restored to him, it is useless to tell him to help himself."

To M. Chevalier

Debate on Turkey.

"*London, June* 2, 1863.—We had a debate in the House on the Turkish question last Friday, *à propos* of the bombardment of Belgrade by the Turks.[1] I took a part, and send you enclosed an

[1] When Servia acquired what was practically her independence, Belgrade was one of five fortresses which the Turks continued to occupy. In the summer of 1862 an affray, such as was frequent enough, took place between some Servian citizens in Belgrade, and some soldiers of the Turkish garrison in the citadel. The Turkish Pasha proceeded to bombard the town, and European diplomacy was once more stirred by the relations between Turkey and her dependencies. In the debate in the House of Commons, May 29, 1863, Mr. Layard made an elaborate defence of the condition and prospects of the Turkish Government. Cobden replied in a particularly able statement of the case against Turkey and the traditional policy of the British Foreign Office. To this Mr. Gladstone

1863.
ÆT. 59.

extract from my speech, in which I alluded to the policy which ought to be pursued in the East on the part of France and England. As you will see, the doctrine, though somewhat new to the House, was very well received. I was very much struck with the altered feeling towards the Turks. They have not a friend, except Palmerston and his partial imitator, Layard. Palmerston was absent from the debate owing to a slight attack of gout. Gladstone was obliged to speak in reply to me, but he did it with evident reluctance. There will be no more Crimean wars for us in defence of the Turks. Should a Slavonic or Hellenic Garibaldi arise to wage war with the Ottoman oppressor, British public opinion will instantly leap to his side, and then our Foreign Office will instantly turn its back upon its old traditions, as it did in the case of Italy. There is no demagogue like our high officials for flattering and bowing to the popular passion of the hour!"

The Polish Insurrection.

"*June* 22, 1863.—My dear friend, I do not understand what good can come from an interference by force of arms in the Polish business.[1] I can see how very great injury could arise to ourselves. We draw food for two or three millions of our people yearly from Russia. If your nation

replied in turn, not taking Mr. Layard's line, but rather deprecating "a general crusade against Turkey," and hoping for the best. *Hansard*, clxxi. pp. 126, etc.

[1] In the beginning of 1863, in consequence of the shameless brutality of the Russian conscription, an insurrection had broken out in Poland. The Emperor of the French proposed that our Government should join him in remonstrating with Prussia for aiding Russia. Lord Palmerston, however, for once took Cobden's view, and "declined to fall into the trap."

1863. goes into such a war it will of course be with the hope of getting some extension of territory out of the squabble. That would no doubt be the case. Germany would fall into confusion, and another 'confederation' would arise, in which France would of course have a voice, and her goodwill must be propitiated by a concession on the Rhine. To this *I* have no objection. But our Foreign Office would go into convulsions at such an audacious rupture of its cherished traditions. Then as we are not in want of further territory, and could not therefore share in the spoil, the danger is that we should quarrel with you. I hope the chimerical scheme will not be persevered in."

ÆT. 59.

To Mr. Sumner

The American War.

"*July* 11, 1862.—It is a long time since I wrote to you. Indeed, to confess the truth, it is a painful task for me to keep up my correspondence with my American friends. But I have not been a less anxious observer of the events which have passed on your side. I shall now best serve the interests of humanity by telling you frankly the state and progress of opinion here. There is an all but unanimous belief that you *cannot* subject the South to the Union. Even they who are your partisans and advocates cannot see their way to any such issue. It is necessary that you should understand that this opinion is so widely and honestly entertained, because it is the key to the expression of views which might otherwise not be quite intelligible. Among some of the governing class in Europe the wish is father to this thought. But

1863.
Æt. 59.

it is not so with the mass of the people. Nor is it so with our own Government entirely. I *know* that Gladstone would restore your Union to-morrow if he could; yet he has steadily maintained from the first that unless there was a strong Union sentiment, it is impossible that the South can be subdued. Now the belief is all but universal that there is no Union feeling in the South; and this is founded latterly upon the fact that no cotton comes from New Orleans. It is said that if the instinct of gain, with cotton at double its usual price, do not induce the people to sell, it is a proof beyond dispute that the political resentment is overwhelming and unconquerable."

"*Feb.* 13, 1863.—If I have not written to you before, it is not because I have been indifferent to what is passing in your midst. I may say sincerely that my thoughts have been almost as much on American as on English politics. But I could do you no service, and shrank from occupying your over-taxed attention, even for a moment. My object in now writing is to speak of a matter which has a practical bearing on your affairs. You know how much alarmed I was from the first lest our Government should interfere in your affairs. The disposition of our ruling class, and the necessities of our cotton trade, pointed to some act of intervention; and the indifference of the great mass of our population to your struggle, the object of which they did not foresee and understand, would have made intervention easy, and indeed popular, if you had been a weaker naval power. This state of feeling existed up to the announcement of the President's Emancipation Policy. From that moment our old anti-slavery feeling began to arouse itself, and it has been gathering strength ever since. The great rush of the public to all the

1863. ÆT. 59.

public meetings called on the subject shows how wide and deep the sympathy for personal freedom still is in the breasts of our people. I know nothing in my political experience so striking, as a display of spontaneous public action, as that of the vast gathering at Exeter Hall, when, without one attraction in the form of a popular orator, the vast building, its minor rooms and passages, and the streets adjoining, were crowded with an enthusiastic audience. That meeting has had a powerful effect on our newspapers and politicians. It has closed the mouths of those who have been advocating the side of the South. And I now write to assure you that any unfriendly act on the part of our Government—no matter which of our aristocratic parties is in power—towards your cause, is not to be apprehended. If an attempt were made by the Government in any way to commit us to the South, a spirit would be instantly aroused which would drive that Government from power. This, I suppose, will be known and felt by the Southern agents in Europe, and if communicated to their Government, must, I should think, operate as a great discouragement to them."

"*April* 2, 1863.—There are certain things which can be done and others which cannot be done by our Government. We are bound to do our best to prevent any ship of war being built for the Confederate Government, for a ship of war can only be used or owned legitimately by a Government. But with munitions of war the case is different. They are bought and sold by private merchants for the whole world, and it is not in the power of Governments to prevent it. Besides, your own Government have laid down repeatedly the doctrine that it is no part of the duty of Governments to interfere with such transactions, for which they are not in any

1863.
Æt. 59.

way responsible. I was therefore very sorry that Mr. Adams had persisted in raising an objection to these transactions, in which, by the way, the North has been quite as much involved as the South. If you have read the debate in the House on the occasion when Mr. Forster brought on the subject last week, you will see how Sir Roundell Palmer, the Solicitor-General, and Mr. Laird the ship-builder, availed themselves of this opening to divert attention from the real question at issue—the building of warships to the question of selling munitions of war, in which latter practice it was shown that you in the North were the great participators."

"*May* 2, 1863.—I am in no fear whatever of any rupture between the two countries arising out of the blockade, or the incendiary language of the politicians or the Press on both sides of the Atlantic, though these may help to precipitate matters on another issue. But the fitting out of privateers to prey on your commerce, and to render valueless your mercantile tonnage, is another and more serious matter. Great material interests are at stake, and unless this evil can be put down the most serious results may follow. Now I have reason to know that our Government fully appreciates the gravity of this matter. Lord Russell, whatever may be the tone of his ill-mannered despatches, is sincerely alive to the necessity of putting an end to the equipping of ships of war in our harbours to be used against the Federal Government by the Confederates. He was *bona fide* in his desire to prevent the *Alabama* from leaving, but he was tricked, and was angry at the escape of that vessel. It is necessary that your Government should know all this; and I hope public opinion in England will be so alive to the necessity of enforcing the law, that there

1863. Æt. 59

will be no more difficulty in the matter. If Lord Russell's despatches to Mr. Adams are not very civil, he may console himself with the knowledge that the Confederates are still worse treated."

"*May* 22, 1863.—I called on Lord Russell, and read every word of your last long indictment against him and Lord Palmerston, to him. He was a little impatient under the treatment, but I got through every word. I did my best to improve on the text in half an hour's conversation. Public opinion is recovering its senses. John Bull, you know, has never before been a neutral when great naval operations have been carried on, and he does not take kindly to the task; but he is becoming graciously reconciled. He also *now* begins to understand that he has acted illegally in applauding those who furnished ships of war to prey on your commerce. It will not be repeated."

"*Midhurst, Aug.* 7, 1863.—Though we have given you such good ground of complaint on account of the cruisers which have left our ports, yet you must not forget that we have been the only obstacle to what would have been almost a European recognition of the South. Had England joined France, they would have been followed by probably every other State of Europe, with the exception of Russia. This is what the Confederate agents have been seeking to accomplish. They have pressed recognition on England and France with persistent energy from the first. I confess that their eagerness for other European intervention in some shape has always given me a strong suspicion of their conscious weakness. But considering how much more we have suffered than other people from the blockade, this abstinence on our part from all diplomatic interference is certainly to our credit, and this I attribute

entirely to the honourable attitude assumed by our working population." 1863. Æt. 59.

To Mr. Paulton

"*Midhurst, Jan.* 8, 1863.— . . . Do you remember when that old slave-dealer, the Confederate envoy, breakfasted with you last spring, and we were discussing the vast preparations then making by the Federal Government, that he remarked with considerable emphasis, when alluding to the incapacity of the Washington Government, 'Sir, I know these men well, and I tell you they are setting in motion a machine which they have not the capacity to control and guide.' I have often thought of the truth of this remark when witnessing the frightful mismanagement at headquarters among the Federals during the last twelve months. If it were not for the negro element I should think it the most wild and chimerical dream that ever entered the human mind to think of subjugating the vast region comprised in the Southern Confederacy. But I have a suspicion that the much-despised 'nigger' is going to play the part of arbiter in this great conflict. Neither party wishes to use him or consult him in the matter. Both parties will tolerate his intervention with about equal disgust. But the North stands in the position of being able to make the first use of some half-million of men who are capable of being drilled into good soldiers, and bear the climate of the battle-ground without the average losses from disease.

"These black troops *in posse* will be more and more the temptation of the North to make the plunge for complete emancipation. It is indeed doubtful whether another army of Northern whites

1863. Æt. 59.

could be raised. If the Federal Congress bolt the black dose, and resolve to employ black regiments, it will be the beginning of the end of slavery. Is it not apparently tending to this? I would have rather seen the work done in almost any other way. But the *Devil of battles* will not, I hope, have it all his own way. God will, I hope, snatch something from the carnage to compensate us for this terrible work. And spite of the *Times* and the devil I hope the slave will get his freedom yet."

"*Midhurst, Jan.* 18, 1863.— . . . I join with you in all your horror of this vulgar and unscientific and endless butchery in America. Before the first shot was fired I wrote to Sumner to say that if I were a New Englander I would vote with both hands for a peaceful separation. But since the fighting began I have regarded the matter as beyond the control of reason or moral suasion, and I have endeavoured to keep my mind as free as I could from an all-absorbing interest in the struggle—simply on this utilitarian principle—that I can do no good there, and I want my faculties and energies to try and do something here.

"My only absorbing care in connexion with the Civil War is to endeavour to prevent this country from interfering with it. To this end I think the anti-slavery direction in which the war is drifting will be favourable. I am not much afraid of any widespread acts of violence on the part of the negroes. They are generally under religious impressions, and are not naturally ferocious. They will grow unsettled, and some of them unmanageable, and there will be great confusion and swaying to and fro. But though I don't expect them to rise and commit desperate crimes, it is quite evident that Jefferson Davis feels all the force of the emancipation

measure as a strategical act. He has allowed his passions to master him in the eyes of the world, as shown by his proclamation in advance. 1863. ÆT. 59.

"It will be a strange working of God's Providence if the negro turns the scale for the North, after the whites on both sides are exhausted. It is clear that the able-bodied blacks will be a cheap resource for soldiers for the North for Southern stations. I hope you and Hargreaves have agreed not to get into an excitement on the subject.[1] The issue is beyond European or human control now, and will go on to the bitter end."

Visit to the Fortifications.

"*Midhurst, Feb.* 3.— . . . I went last week to Portsmouth to see the fortifications. I spent a couple of days in the neighbourhood. Starting by train from Chichester, I stopped at Havant, where a couple of officers from Portsmouth met me, and we went thence in a fly over the Downs by Portsdown Hill to Fareham, and then from the latter place to Gosport.

"Our road along the Downs passed beside the great inland chain of forts covering all the high ground within four or five miles of Portsmouth. It is necessary to see these things to understand them. The South Down forts are not designed for defence against a landing. They, as well as an inner system of forts between the Downs and the sea, are planned on the theory that an enemy has beaten us at sea and landed in force, and having worsted an army on shore, these forts are to prevent the foreign force from taking up a position on the Downs, and shelling

[1] Mr. Paulton, like Mr. Lindsay, Mr. Moffatt, and one or two other of Cobden's intimate friends, did not sympathize with the cause of the Union.

1863. ÆT. 59.

the docks at four or five miles off. Of course the theory implies that the enemy is free to go elsewhere, and the reasonable inference may be that he would prefer going to London, or at least coming to rob our hen-roosts who live under the Downs! The programme of course contemplates that our own soldiers are safely ensconced in these forts beneath their casemates, and behind gigantic ditches in the chalk —in fact you never saw such precipitous excavations as these are in the Downs to prevent a foreign army from getting at an English army, whilst the country is at their mercy. I need hardly add that there is not an officer of either service with a head on his shoulders who is under fifty, that does not look with supreme contempt, disgust, and humiliation at these works.

"My companions were Captain Cowper Coles, R.N., the inventor of the cupola ships, and Colonel Williams, of the Marine Artillery, who has a pension for wounds, though a young man.

"I saw all that was going on in the dockyards, and came away with the conviction that we are now wasting our money on iron-cased vessels with broadsides, whilst a new invention is in the field which will entirely supersede them. Captain Coles is building a vessel with four cupolas, or rather is superintending the alteration of one on a principle which it is clear must render broadside guns useless."

To Mr. Bright

"*April* 22, 1863.—There is a great and growing uneasiness about our relations with the United States, and there is so wide an interest taken by our friends from America—of whom there is an influential gathering just now drawn to this side by an

apparent fear of some impending mischief—as well as by English people, that I feel quite oppressed with a sense of the responsibility, and write to say that I entreat you to come to town, if only on Friday to return on Saturday.[1] Besides the confidence you give me when we are together, I feel quite sure that the fact of your being present with the power of reply exerts a restraining influence on Palmerston and the other speakers on the Treasury Bench, and it is especially important that they should be so restrained on this occasion. I hope, therefore, that you will find yourself in a situation to come for one night."

1863. ÆT. 59.

"*Sept.* 8, 1863.—The tide of battle seems to have set in so strongly for the North, that I don't think the friends of freedom need feel any anxiety about the result so far as fighting is concerned. There is, of course, a tremendous difficulty beyond, but there is something more than accident which seems in the long run to favour the right in this wicked world, and I have a strong persuasion that we may live to see a compensating triumph for humanity as the result of this most gigantic of civil wars.

"I confess I cannot penetrate the mystery of French politics in connexion with the United States question. I suppose the Emperor has been very strongly pressed by Slidell and other interested parties to take some step to encourage the South. His unwise Mexican expedition, about which he must have daily more of doubt and misgiving, has placed him in a false and dangerous position on the continent of North America; and we all know how in public, as in private life, one false step seems only

[1] This refers to an important speech of Cobden's on the duty of enforcing the Foreign Enlistment Act. It was made on April 24.

1863. Æt. 59.

to necessitate another. I have no doubt that his Mexican embarrassment is plied with consummate tact and unscrupulous daring by the Confederate agents. The Richmond Government will offer *any* terms for the French alliance. Fortunately they are in such straits themselves, that they have little to offer as a temptation to an ambitious but cautious mind like Napoleon's. The influential people who surround the Emperor, such as Fould and Rouher, are of course opposed to any interference in the American quarrel. . . . After all, our chief reliance for the maintenance of a non-intervention policy by France and England is not in the merits or justice of that course, but—it is sad to say it—in the tremendous warlike power manifested by the free States of America. Some shallow and indiscreet members of our aristocracy exclaimed at the outbreak of the Civil War, 'The Republican bubble has burst'; but the experience of the last two years shows that, whether in peace or war, this Republic, instead of a bubble, is the greatest and most solid fact in all history. . . . It is to be hoped that gradually our educated mob of the clubs will become, however unwillingly, acquainted with the warlike resources of America. At present, nine out of ten of them are under the complacent delusion that we have the power at any moment to raise the blockade, and effect a peace on the basis of separation. And such is the invulnerable conceit of a large part of our aristocratic middle class, that if such facts as I have given above were published by you or myself, they would be read with incredulity, and we should be denounced as Yankee sympathizers.

"I always take for granted the Government will not allow the ironclads to leave Laird's, unless they know their real destination. The progress of the

1863.
Æt. 59.

Federal arms will help the Cabinet over some of the legal technicalities of the enlistment act."

"*Midhurst, Oct.* 12, 1863.—I have nothing to say, but that Mr. Whiting, who is here as successor to Mr. Evarts as legal representative of the Washington Government, has been visiting me, and from a rather confidential conversation with him, I find that you must have been misinformed as to the correspondence or communications that have been taking place between Adams and our Foreign Office. The President, from what I gather from Mr. W., who seems to be in the most confidential relations with him and his Cabinet, is determined whatever happens, short of a direct intervention, not to have a rupture with England or France during the Civil War. And he has not authorized Adams to give any notice of leaving his post even if the ironclads are permitted, *on the plea of legality*, to leave our ports. Nor will he meddle with Mexican politics, whatever may happen, whilst Jeff Davis is in the field. In all this he shows a strong common sense much to be commended.

"Mr. Whiting tells me that Mr. Adams had no assurance up to the last from our Government that the Rams would not leave, and even when our semi-official papers were announcing that they had been arrested, he gave expression to a fear that he might get up any morning and find the ships had escaped. Now that I see by yesterday's paper that the broad arrow has been put upon the Rams, I suppose the matter is settled."

"*Midhurst, Oct.* 17, 1863.—I return Aspinall's and Chase's letters. I was pleased with Chase when I saw him in Ohio, where he was governor of the State in 1859. He is in his physical and mental traits not unlike Sumner—a massy, stately-principled

1864. man, but more practical and less of the rhetorician than his Massachusetts colleague. He is altogether a different type to Seward.

Æt. 60.

"I have a letter from Evarts by the last mail. He seems well pleased at the detention of the Rams. He has a passage in his letter which seems rather to corroborate your information about Lord Russell. He says, 'From information which I have of the severity and uncertainty of the final struggle with your Ministry, Earl Russell was discreditably slow and unsteady in coming to the right decision. I am sure that when the communications of proofs as to the destination of these ships of war made to your Government are made public, common sense on both sides of the water will be shocked at the stumbling hesitancy of the Ministerial Council in face of the facts, and at the narrow escape the two nations have had from at least partial hostilities.'"

"*October* 4, 1864.—I should say that as a politician Lincoln is very superior to McClellan, who is a professional soldier and nothing more. By the way, Lincoln stumped Illinois for the Senate in opposition to Douglas, the ablest debater in America after Clay. They travelled from county town to county town together, and met the same audience on the same platform in forty or fifty counties, questioning, bantering, and exposing each other's shortcomings. It is the fashion to underrate Lincoln intellectually in part, because he illustrates his arguments with amusing anecdotes. But Franklin was not less given to apologues, and some of them not of the most refined character. It is quite certain that an inferior man could never have maintained such a contest as Lincoln went through with Douglas. Presidents are apt to fulfil the second term better than the first. Chase is the strongest man of the

1863. ÆT. 59.

Republican party, and I sincerely hope Lincoln will bring him back to the Treasury.

"I hope you were pleased with the compliment paid us in California.[1] There is a poetical sublimity about the idea of associating our name with a tree 300 feet high and 60 feet girth! Verily it is a monument not built with men's hands. If I were twenty years younger I would hope to look on these forest giants; great trees and rivers have an attraction for me."

To Mr. Hargreaves

Political Torpor of the Day.

"*April* 5, 1863.—How do you admire the reception given to the 'Feargus O'Connor of the middle classes' in Scotland?[2] For the Town Councils and their addresses I can find excuses; they are privileged flunkies, and nothing else could be expected from them. But there is no doubt that the demonstration was largely shared by the working class, which is certainly one of the most singular and inexplicable of public incidents. It brings to my mind the saying of our librarian, ——, who, when speaking of the old Premier, called him 'the most successful impostor since Mahomet!'

"There is a remarkable fact in the political movement, or rather political torpor of our day, that the non-electors, or working men, have no kind of organization or organ of the Press by which they can make their existence known, either to help their

[1] The names of Cobden and Bright were inscribed respectively on tablets on two of the giant trees of the Yosemite valley.

[2] Lord Palmerston was installed as Lord Rector at Glasgow, March 30, and had a very triumphant reception. See Irving's *Annals of our Time*, p. 644.

1863. friends or prevent their body being used as was done in Glasgow, to strengthen their enemies—for the latter effect has no doubt been produced by the address from the working class presented to the Premier.

Æt. 59.

"I observe what you say about Bright's powers of eloquence. That eloquence has been most unsparingly used since the repeal of the Corn Laws —now going on for nearly twenty years—in advocating financial economy and parliamentary reform, and in every possible way for the abasement of privilege and the elevation of the masses. If he could talk till Doomsday he would never surpass the strains of eloquence with which he has expounded the right and demolished the wrong cause. Yet see with what absolute lack of success!

"Now if you have ever the chance of bringing your influence to bear on him in this connexion, let it be, I entreat you, to urge him to take any opportunity that the working class may offer him to tell them frankly that nobody can help them until they are determined to help themselves. Let the responsibility be thrown back on them in a way to sting them into an effort, if self-respect fail to excite them. They should be told plainly that old parties have coalesced on the ground that no further parliamentary reform is required — that five millions of adult males in the kingdom are politically ignored, or only remembered to be insulted, and that this state of things will endure so long as the five millions eat, drink, smoke, and sleep contentedly under the proscription, and that no power on earth will ever help them out of their political serfdom until they show that they can discriminate between those who would emancipate them and those who would keep them as they are. Until the non-electoral class can have a *bona*

fide organization in every large town, composed of their own class, and self-sustained, it is a pure waste of life and strength for a man of Bright's genius to attempt to advance their cause in that packed assembly, the House of Commons."

1863. ÆT. 59

To Mr. Bigelow

On Privateering.

"*Oct.* 6, 1863.—In 1854, on the breaking out of the Crimean War, a communication was sent by England and France to the American Government, expressing a confident hope that it would, 'in the spirit of just reciprocity, give orders that no privateer under Russian colours shall be equipped, or *victualled*, or admitted with its prizes, in the ports of the United States,' etc. It has occurred to me to call your attention to this, although I dare say it has not escaped Mr. Dayton's recollection. But I should be curious to know what answer the French Government would now make if its own former language was quoted against the course now being taken at Brest in repairing, and I suppose 'victualling,' the *Florida*. If the answer be that this vessel is not a 'privateer' but a regularly commissioned ship of war, then I think the opportunity should not be lost to put on record a rejoinder to this argument, showing the futility of the Declaration of Paris against privateering; for if a vessel sailing under one form of authority issued by Jefferson Davis, and called a 'commission,' can do all the mischief to your merchant-vessels which another could do carrying another piece of paper called a 'letter of marque,' it is obvious that the renunciation of privateering by the Paris Congress

1863. ÆT. 59.

is a mere empty phrase, and all the boasted gain to humanity is nothing but a delusion if not a hollow subterfuge. I think it might be well if Mr. Dayton were to take this opportunity of justifying the policy of the United States in refusing to be a party to the Declaration of Paris, unless private property at sea was exempt from capture by armed ships of *all kinds*. The argument would be valuable for reproduction at a future time, when the question of belligerent rights comes up again for discussion."

CHAPTER XXXV

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. DELANE

1863.
Æt. 59.

It was inevitable that a public man, working for a transformation of political opinion, should incur the hostility of the great newspaper of the day, for the simple reason that it has always been the avowed principle of the conductors of that newspaper to keep very close to the political opinion of the country in its unregenerate state. This principle it is not our business here to discuss, but we can easily perceive how it would come to make the newspaper sincerely inimical to the Manchester school. We need not resort to private grudges to explain what is perfectly intelligible without them.

"I remember," said Cobden, in his speech on behalf of Mr. Bright at Manchester in 1857, "the first time I spoke in public after returning home from the Continent in 1847. It was at a dinner-party in Manchester at which I took the chair; and I took the opportunity of launching this question of the Press, and saying that the newspaper Press of England was not free, and that this was a thing which the reformers of the country ought to set about—to emancipate it. Well, I got a most vicious article next day from the *Times* newspaper for that, and the *Times* has followed us both with

1863. Æt. 59.

a very ample store of venom ever since."[1] "Any man," he said on the same occasion, "who has lived in public life, as I have, must know that it is quite useless to contradict any falsehood or calumny, because it comes up again next day just as rife as ever. There is the *Times* newspaper always ready to repeat it, and the grosser the better." "My plan," he wrote to a friend in 1861, "has always been to meet that journal with a bold front, and neither to give nor to take quarter. I may add that if ever I have succeeded in any public proceedings, it has always been in spite of the opposition of that print. It was so with the League; with the abolition of the Taxes on Knowledge; and with the French Treaty. You may take my word for it, you never can be in the path for success, in any great measure of policy, unless you are in opposition to that journal."[2]

It was very easy to see the reason why all this should be as it was. In 1850, Cobden told Mr. John Cassell that he believed the newspaper stamp to be the greatest grievance that the democracy had in the whole list of fiscal exactions. "So long as the penny lasts, there can be no daily Press for the middle or working class. Who below the rank of a merchant or wholesale dealer can afford to take in a daily paper at fivepence? Clearly it is beyond the reach of the mechanic and the shopkeeper. The result is that the daily Press is written for its customers—the aristocracy, the millionaires, and the clubs and news-rooms. The great public cannot have its organs of the daily Press, because it cannot afford to pay for them. The dissenters have no daily organ for the same reason. The governing class

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 77.
[2] *To Mr. W. S. Lindsay*, Feb. 25, 1861.

1863.
ÆT. 59.

in this country will resist the removal of the penny stamp, not on account of the loss of revenue (*that* is no obstacle with a surplus of two or three millions), but because they know that the stamp makes the daily Press the instrument and servant of the oligarchy."

His correspondence shows with how sharp an eye Cobden watched his masked foe. He jealously noted any post that was conferred on a writer in the *Times*; in this respect, I am bound to confess, being rather apt to make mountains out of extremely small molehills.[1] He told his friends in scornful tones of the social deference that was paid in private by great people to the famous editor, and was scandalized, here also rather unreasonably, to find him dining at tables where every guest but himself was an ambassador, a Cabinet Minister, or a bishop. An eminent visitor from the United States, who had access to London society, was for a long time perplexed by the social attentions that were bestowed on this mysterious being, and in conversation with Cobden contrasted the position of the Press and its conductors in England with that of similar personages in his own country. "In America," said Cobden, referring to this in a letter to Mr. Hargreaves, "the editor or proprietor puts his name on the front of his paper, fights the battles of his party openly, shares in the honours of its victories, and is to be found

[1] It is worth remembering, however, that in the famous Slough speech of 1858, Mr. Disraeli accused his Whig adversaries of "corrupting the once pure and independent Press of England." "Innocent people in the country," he said, "who look to the leading articles in the newspapers for advice and direction—who look to what are called leading organs to be the guardians of their privileges and the directors of their political consciences—are not the least aware, because this sort of knowledge travels slowly, that leading organs now are place-hunters of the Court, and that the once stern guardians of popular rights simper in the enervating atmosphere of gilded saloons."

1863. ÆT. 59.

among the senators, the governors of states, etc. But with us the conductor of the *Times* preserves a strict *incognito* to his readers, on the plea that anonymous writing is necessary for preserving his independence, whilst he inconsistently drops the mask in the presence of those who dispense social distinctions and dispose of Government patronage—the very persons towards whom in the interests of the public he ought to preserve his independence." [1]

In November 1863, it happened that in his annual address to his constituents, Cobden made a passing reference to the land question, and Mr. Bright followed with more on the same subject. The *Times* promptly accused the two Gracchi of Rochdale of exciting discontent among the poor, and proposing a spoliation of the owners of land. The rest of the story is worth telling, if for no other reason, because it illustrates the kind of opinion which public writers could at that time pretend seriously to hold about these two statesmen.

By accident Cobden saw the misrepresentation of which his enemy had been guilty, and he at once wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Times*:—

SIR—The following is extracted from your yesterday's leading article:—

"Then, though a small state may have something to lose by change, it has usually more to gain; and so it comes to pass that it looks upon any attempt to reconstruct the map, or reform the institutions of Europe, with something of that satisfaction with which the poor might regard *Mr. Bright's proposition for a division among them of the lands of the rich*, or the Roman plebeians might hang on the lips of Gracchus when he rose to expound to them his last plan for a new colony, with large grants of land to every citizen who should join it."

[1] *To W. Hargreaves*, Feb. 16, 1861.

1863.
ÆT. 59.

Without communicating with Mr. Bright, I trouble you with a few words on this gross literary outrage, which concerns not him alone, but every public man. To utter a syllable to prove that the above assertion, that Mr. Bright advocated a division of the lands of the rich among the poor, is a groundless and gratuitous falsehood, would be to offer an insult to one who has done more than probably any other public man, to popularize those economical truths on which the rights of property are based. To say that it is a foul libel for which the publisher is amenable to law were beside the question, because the object of the calumny would scorn any other court of appeal than that of public opinion. But a wider question is forced on our attention by this specimen of your too habitual mode of dealing, not merely with individuals, but with the interests of society. A tone of pre-eminent unscrupulousness in the discussion of political questions, a contempt for the rights and feelings of others, and a shameless disregard of the claims of consistency and sincerity on the part of its writers, have long been recognized as the distinguishing characteristics of the *Times*, and placed it in marked contrast with the rest of the periodical Press, including the penny journals of the metropolis and the provinces. Its writers are, I believe, betrayed into this tone mainly by their reliance on the shield of an impenetrable secrecy. No gentleman would dream of saying, under the responsibility of his signature, what your writer said of Mr. Bright yesterday. I will not stop to remark on the deterioration of character which follows when a man of education and rare ability thus lowers himself—ay, even in his own eyes—to a condition of moral cowardice; for will he deny that if he were to meet Mr. Bright in the club, or the House of Commons, with the knowledge that his secret was divulged, he would cower with conscious inferiority before the man he had stabbed in the dark? This, however, is his own affair. But there is another aspect of the subject in which the public is directly interested.

1863. Æt. 59.

In the present management of the *Times* there is an essential departure from the plan on which it was conducted twenty or thirty years ago, which distinguishes it from all other journals. They who associate in the higher political circles of the metropolis know that the chief editor and the manager of the *Times*, while still maintaining a strict *incognito* towards the public, drops the mask with very sufficient reasons in the presence of those powerful classes who are at once the dispensers of social distinction, and (on which I might have something to say) of the patronage of the Government. We all know the man whose fortune is derived from the *Times*; we know its manager; its only avowed and responsible editor—he of the semi-official correspondence with Sir Charler Napier in the Baltic—through whose hands, though he never pen a line himself, every slander in its leaders must pass—is as well known to us as the chief official at the Home Office. Now the question is forced on us, whether we who are behind the scenes are not bound, in the interests of the uninitiated public, and as the only certain mode of abating such outrages as this, to lift the veil and dispel the illusion by which the *Times* is enabled to pursue this game of secrecy to the public, and servility to the Government—a game (I purposely use the word) which secures for its connexions the corrupt advantages, while denying to the public its own boasted benefits of the anonymous system.

It will be well for public men to decide, each in his own case (for myself I have no doubt on the subject), whether, in response to such attacks as these, they will continue to treat the *Times* as an impersonal myth; or whether, on the contrary, they will in future summon the responsible editor, manager, or proprietor to the bar of public opinion, and hold him up by name to the obloquy which awaits the traducer and the calumniator in every other walk of social and political life.

I am, etc.,

RICHARD COBDEN.

MIDHURST, *December* 4, 1863.

This letter was not inserted in the *Times*, and the Editor wrote to Cobden a reply, of which the following is the substance :— 1863. Æt. 59.

THE *TIMES* OFFICE, *Dec.* 7, 1863.

The Editor of the *Times* presents his compliments to Mr. Cobden, and encloses a proof of his letter, which, though it arrived by Saturday's post, only reached the Editor's hands last evening. He could not then give it immediate consideration, but, in deference to Mr. Cobden's name, he announced that it should be published to-morrow.

On reading it, however, this morning, he thinks—and he trusts Mr. Cobden will, on reperusal, agree with him —that Mr. Cobden has no right to expect him, upon a pretext entirely irrelevant, to publish a series of most offensive and unfounded imputations upon himself and his friends.

. . . The facts, however, are shortly these :—Messrs. Cobden and Bright make two speeches at Rochdale, which are reported in the *Times* at unusual length, and with extraordinary promptitude. These speeches are discussed elaborately in two leading articles on successive days, and in each of them certain passages are interpreted as recommending a repartition of the land among the poor. Messrs. Cobden and Bright are expressly challenged to disavow this interpretation if it misrepresents their meaning ; but they make no reply, and apparently accept it as conveying their true intention.

The speeches, as reported, also remain before the public for upwards of a week, and the interpretation put upon them by the *Times* provokes no adverse remark. At last an article appears upon a totally different subject, in which an allusion is made in a single phrase to Mr. Bright's supposed opinions, and Mr. Cobden pounces upon this phrase, not that he may discuss the true interpretation of Mr. Bright's expressions, but that he may

1863. make a vague and most offensive attack upon the *Times* and its conductors.

ÆT. 59. The Editor declines to permit the *Times* to be made the means of disseminating imputations which he knows to be unfounded, and which are entirely irrelevant to the question at issue.

The sensation was tremendous in Fleet Street and Pall Mall, when Cobden published his rejoinder, not to the impersonal Editor, but to Mr. Delane in his own proper name.

To John T. Delane, Esq.

Sir—You and I have been long personally acquainted; your handwriting is known to me, and I know you to be the chief Editor of the *Times*. Under such circumstances I cannot allow you to suppress your individuality, and shield yourself under the third person of the editorial nominative, in a correspondence affecting your personal responsibility for a scandalous aspersion on myself (as I now learn for the first time from you) as well as on Mr. Bright.

Your refusal to publish my former letter is a matter so entirely within your own province, that I have nothing to say upon it, except to congratulate myself on the recent revolution in the newspaper world, which renders your decision comparatively harmless. A few years ago the *Times* possessed almost a monopoly of publicity. Four-fifths of the daily newspaper circulation issued from its press. *Now* it constitutes, probably, one-tenth of our diurnal journalism, and my letter will be only the more generally read from having been excluded from your columns.

But your letter proceeds to offer some most singular arguments in justification of your attack on Mr. Bright. You state that your journal had previously contained two leading articles, casting the same imputation both on him and myself, that you had challenged us to dis-

avow your interpretation of our speeches, and as we had failed to do so, you accepted our silence as an acknowledgment of the truth of your interpretation,—in other words, as proof of our guilt! Here we have, in a compendious form, an exhibition of those qualities which characterize the editorial management of the *Times*,—of that arrogant self-complacency, logical incoherence, and moral bewilderment, which a too long career of impunity and irresponsibility could alone engender. 1863. Æt. 59.

Now that which lies at the basis of this reasoning, if such it may be termed, is an inordinate display of what I must call *Times* egotism. Notwithstanding that your journal has now but a fractional part of the daily newspaper circulation, you complacently assume that all the world are your constant readers. The *Times* never enters my house, except by rare accident. This I know to be also the case with Mr. Bright, who will, in all probability, never have seen your attack until he reads it in my letter. It is only during the session, at the Club, that I am in the habit of seeing your paper. The chance visit of a friend last Friday placed in my hand the *Times* of the previous day, when that scandalous paragraph caught my eye which formed the text of my letter to you. I was entirely ignorant of the two former attacks, which, by a droll process of reasoning, you now invite me to accept as a justification of the third. Now, let me ask you to descend for a minute from your editorial chair, while I illustrate this logic by a hypothetical case put to Mr. Delane, the barrister. Suppose that the constituents of Mr. Bright were to indict your publisher for defaming their member, and that it was proposed in a consultation of lawyers, at which you were present, to set up as a plea of justification at the trial that the same libel had been twice previously published against both Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden,—would it fail to occur to you that, in the eyes of an honest judge and jury, this defence would be considered an aggravation of the offence?

But we will assume, for the sake of argument, that

1863. Mr. Bright and I are regular subscribers to, and diligent readers of, your newspaper. Is it seriously contended that as often as you choose to pervert the sense of our speeches, and charge us with schemes of public robbery, the *onus* lies with us to disprove the imputation, and that neglecting to do so, we have no right to complain if we are thenceforth treated as felons? Would it not occur to any one but an editor of the *Times* that, before we violate the ninth commandment, the obligation lies with us to know that we are not bringing a false accusation against our neighbour?

ÆT. 59.

Now, a word upon the subject which has given rise to this correspondence. Nobody knows better than yourself, except the writer who actually penned the scandalous passage in question, that this charge of wishing to divide the land of the rich among the poor, when levelled at Mr. Bright, is nothing but the resort to a stale rhetorical trick (though the character of the libel is not on that account altered) to draw away public attention from the real issue, and thus escape from the discussion of a serious, but, for the moment, an inconvenient public topic. In order to trail a red herring across the true scent the cry of spoliation was raised. You and your writers cannot be ignorant that the laws and political institutions of this country tend to promote the agglomeration of agricultural land in a constantly lessening number of hands:—you and I know, by a joint experience, which neither of us is likely to have forgotten, how great are the obstacles which the law interposes to the free transfer of landed property in this country. Now, the policy which sustains this state of things is a public question, which is not only fairly open to discussion, but invites the earnest attention and study of public men. In this, as in every other human concern, we must bring the matter to the test of experience, and in no way can this be more effectually done than by a comparison between the condition of the great majority of the agricultural population in this and other countries. The subject of our land laws has engaged the attention

1863.
ÆT. 59.

of eminent statesmen, and of our highest legal authorities; but I will venture to add—and it is all I shall condescend to say in refutation of your aspersions—that if there are two persons, who beyond all others, have given pledges throughout an ardent discussion of kindred topics during a quarter of a century, that in debating the question of the tenure and transfer of land they would observe the restraints of law, justice, and political economy, they are the men whom your journal has dared to charge with the advocacy of a scheme for robbing the landowners of their property for the benefit of the poor.

Judging from past experience, this intrusion of a gross personality will tend only to attract public notice to a matter which it was meant to put out of sight. It has been the fate of the *Times* to help forward every cause it has opposed. By its truculent, I had almost said ruffianly, attacks on every movement while in the weakness of infancy, it has roused to increased efforts the energies of those it has assailed: while, at the same time, it has awakened the attention of a languid public, and attracted the sympathy of fair and manly minds. It is thus that such public measures as the abolition of the Corn Laws, the repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, and the negotiation of the Treaty of Commerce with France triumphed in spite of its virulent, pertinacious, and unscrupulous opposition; until, at last, I am tending to the conviction that there are three conditions only, requisite for the success of any great project of reform,—namely, a good cause, persevering advocates, and the hostility of the *Times*.

I shall forward this correspondence for publication in the *Rochdale Observer*, that it may at least be perused by the community which has the greatest interest in a controversy which concerns the reputation of Mr. Bright and myself.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

R. COBDEN.

MIDHURST, *Dec.* 9, 1863.

1863. Æt. 59.

To this Mr. Delane replied (Dec. 11) that it was quite true that they had long been personally acquainted; that there was no need to identify his handwriting; and that he had no desire to deny his personal responsibility for what Cobden was pleased to call his "scandalous aspersions." Proceeding to vindicate himself, Mr. Delane asked whether it was egotistic or unreasonable to suppose that one who had pounced so promptly upon a single phrase in an article of much inferior interest to himself, should have read the articles which discussed his own speech? Could he be expected to know that a gentleman who once preferred a single copy of the *Times* "to all the books of Thucydides" did not admit the *Times* to his house?[1] The pith of the vindication was in the following paragraph:—

You attribute to the *Times* a deliberate misrepre-

[1] This refers to an expression of Cobden's which was a standing joke against him in those days. At a meeting of the Manchester Athenæum (Dec. 27, 1850), Cobden used the following language:—"I take it that, as a rule, grown-up men, in these busy times, read very little else but newspapers. I think the reading of volumes is almost the exception; and the man who habitually has between his fingers 400 or 500 newspapers in the course of the year—that is, daily and weekly newspapers—and is engaged pretty actively in business, or in political or public life—depend upon it, whatever he may say, or like to have it thought to the contrary, he reads very little else, as a rule, but the current periodical literature; and I doubt if a man with limited time could read anything else that would be much more useful to him. I believe it has been said that one copy of the *Times* contains more useful information than the whole of the historical books of Thucydides—(laughter);—and I am very much inclined to think that to an Englishman or an American of the present day that is strictly true." The opinion may be sound or not, but the expression was a slip, because it showed that the speaker knew little about the author on whose comparative value he was hinting a judgment. Too much was made of the slip by journalists and collegians who knew little more about Thucydides than did Cobden himself, but who now wrote as if that rather troublesome author were the favourite companion of their leisure hours.

1863.
ÆT. 59.

sentation of your meaning and that of Mr. Bright, as to the means of amending the unequal distribution of land between the rich and the poor. I repeat that certain passages in your speeches will, in my opinion, bear no other interpretation than that ascribed to them. If you merely intended to recommend measures for facilitating the conveyance of land, as your reference to our transaction at Ascot would suggest, your language was the most strangely exaggerated that was ever used to further a humble instalment of law reform. If you had read the *Times*, instead of condemning it unread, you would have known that it has always advocated the simplification of means for the transfer of land, and that its advocacy has not been altogether unsuccessful. But just as no simplification of conveyances will compel the rich to sell land or enable the poor to buy it, so no legislative measure will render the purchase of land a profitable investment for the poor.

The possession, the transfer, and the tenure of land are, however, public questions, which are best discussed, not between Mr. Cobden and Mr. Delane, but as it has always been the practice of the English Press to discuss them—anonymously. That practice was not invented by me; it will not be destroyed by yourself. It has approved itself to the judgment of all, whether statesmen or publicists, who have appreciated the freedom and independence of the Press; and I believe it to be essential to the interests not only of the Press, but of the public.

Cobden, however, insisted on carrying on the controversy with Mr. Delane:—

To John T. Delane, Esq.

Sir—I have received the letter dated from your private residence, and bearing your own signature, in which you take on yourself personally the responsibility

1863. ÆT. 59

of the interpretation put by the *Times* on the speeches of Mr. Bright and myself at Rochdale—namely, that we proposed "a division among the poor of the lands of the rich." Your letter to me says:—

"You attribute to the *Times* a deliberate misrepresentation of your meaning, and that of Mr. Bright, as to the means of amending the unequal distribution of the land between the rich and the poor. I repeat that certain passages in your speeches will, in my opinion, bear no other interpretation than that ascribed to them."

This is a grave accusation. I am told that, if proved, it would bring Mr. Bright and myself within the provisions of the Act 57th Geo. III. cap. 19, and render us liable to the penal consequences of transportation for seven years.

I will not believe that you can be so wanting in the respect due to others, as well as yourself, as to have addressed this accusation to me, unless with the belief that you have evidence to substantiate it.

I call on you to give me those "certain passages" to which you refer, and which are really now the only question at issue between you and me. That there may be no excuse or ground for delay, I accept the report which appeared in your paper as an accurate version of my speech; and to aid you in your task I have cut from the *Times* the entire passage which contains all that I said in reference to the condition of the people generally, or to the agricultural population, and the land question in particular. But let it be distinctly understood that I do not confine you to this extract, but that I give you the entire range of my speech.

Before giving the passage I will say a few words, which, although I do not in the slightest degree claim for them the character of evidence, may have interest in some quarters.

It is known that I am not in the habit of writing a word beforehand of what I speak in public. Like other speakers, practice has given me as perfect self-

1863.
ÆT. 59.

possession in the presence of an audience as if I were writing in my closet. Now, my ever-constant and over-ruling thought while addressing a public meeting, the one necessity which long experience of the arts of controversialists has impressed on my mind, is to avoid the possibility of being misrepresented, and prevent my opponents from raising a false issue—a trick of logic as old as the time of Aristotle. If I have, as some favourable critics are pleased to think, sometimes spoken with clearness, it is more owing to this ever-present fear of misrepresentation than any other cause:—it is thus that the most noxious things in life may have their uses. When in my speech at Rochdale I came to touch upon the subject of the land, the thought instantly flashed upon me—and none but the public speaker knows with what velocity thoughts move when in the presence of 4000 listeners—that I was dealing with a question about which there is a superstition in England, unknown elsewhere, and that the enemy would raise the cry of agrarianism against me, and hence my denunciation of agrarian outrage, which will be found in the following extract. Had I been inspired with the faculty of second-sight, and seen the Editor of the *Times* sitting bodily penning his criticism on my speech, I could not have more completely refuted and confounded in anticipation the charge now brought against me.

The following is the passage referred to:—

> It has been a fashion of late to talk of an extension of the franchise as something not to be tolerated, because it is assumed that the mass of the community are not fitted to take a part in government, and people point to America and France, and other countries, and draw comparisons between this country and other countries. Now, I hope I shall not be considered revolutionary, because at my age I don't want any revolutions. They won't serve me, I am sure, or anybody that belongs to me. England may compare very favourably with most other countries if you draw the line in society tolerably high; and if you compare the condition of the rich and the upper classes of England, or a considerable portion of the middle classes, with the same

1863. ÆT. 59.

classes abroad. I don't think a rich man, barring the climate, which is not very good, could be very much happier anywhere else than in England; but when my opponents treat this question of the franchise as one that threatens to bring the masses of the people down from their present state to the level of other nations, I say that I have travelled in most civilized countries, and that the masses of my fellow-countrymen do not compare so favourably with the masses of other countries as I could wish. I find in other countries a greater proportion of people owning property than there are in England. I don't know a Protestant community in the world where the masses of the people are so illiterate as in England. These are not bad tests of the condition of a people. It is no use your talking of your army and navy, your exports and your imports—it is no use telling me you have a small portion of your people exceedingly well off. I want to bring the test to a comparison of the majority of the people with the majority of the people in other countries. Now, I say with regard to some things in foreign countries we don't compare favourably. The condition of the English peasantry has no parallel on the face of the earth. (Hear.) You have no other peasantry but that of England which is entirely divorced from the land. There is no other country in the world where you will not find men holding the plough and turning up the furrow upon their own freehold. *I don't want any agrarian outrages by which we should change all this*, but this I find, and it is quite consistent with human nature, that wherever I go the condition of the people is generally pretty good, in comparison with the power they have to take care of themselves; and if you have a class entirely destitute of political power, while in another country they possess it, they will be treated there with more consideration, they will have greater advantages, they will be better educated, and have a better chance of possessing property than in a country where they are deprived of political power. (Hear.)

You will observe in the above passage from my speech, taken from your own report, that I use the words, "I don't want any agrarian outrages by which we should change all this"; and now we must appeal to the authority of the lexicographer. If you turn to *Webster's* (quarto) *Dictionary* you will find the word "agrarian" interpreted, on the authority of Burke, as follows :—

1863.
ÆT. 59.

"Relating to lands. Denoting or pertaining to an equal division of lands; as, the agrarian laws of Rome, which distributed the conquered and other public lands equally among all the citizens, limiting the quantity which each might enjoy." Again, in the same dictionary the word "agrarianism" is given as an equal division of lands or property, or the principles of those who favour such a division."

Thus, in repudiating the agrarian system, I repudiated, in pure and unquestionable English, according to Burke, the principles of those who favour an equal division of land; I repudiated the agrarian laws of Rome; and yet, in spite of this, you charge me and Mr. Bright with "proposing a division among the poor of the lands of the rich," and you associate us with Gracchus in schemes of socialistic spoliation.

Mr. Delane in reply (Dec. 16) insisted that the passage to which Cobden had referred him, did in his opinion convey a proposition for the division among the poor of the lands of the rich. "You seem to assume," he said, "that I charged you with proposing that this division should be accomplished by violence. But your own words were there to prove to me that such was not your meaning, and to confute me instantly if I had attempted to attach that meaning to it." This, as we shall see in a moment, ruined Mr. Delane's case, for the *Times* had distinctly and in terms described the proposed change as the work of violence. Meanwhile, he went on to say that it could be effected by compulsory partition after death as in France:—

A similar measure proposed by yourself, or by Mr. Bright, and carried in a Parliament elected principally by the peasantry whom you desire to enfranchise, because they would then "have a better chance of having property," would in two or three generations not only

1863. ÆT. 59.

check the accumulation of land in few hands, but would break up all existing estates, great or small, and thus largely increase the number of proprietors. In another generation, probably, the peasant himself would "turn up the furrow on his own freehold," and be no longer "divorced from the land."

You suggest so obviously that it is by legislative measures—rendered possible by giving political power to the peasantry—you propose to "amend the unequal distribution of the land between the "rich and the poor," that no one would think of charging you with endeavouring to effect this great change by violence.

It was clear that Mr. Delane had now surrendered himself into the hands of his adversary. Cobden did not allow him to escape. "For the first time," he replied (Dec. 18), "you now disavow having imputed to Mr. Bright and myself the design of promoting by violent, illegal, or immoral means a redistribution of the land of this country." Grammar, logic, and common sense, he said, all revolted against the Editor's attempt to show the connexion between his former language and his new accusation.

You now profess only to impute to us the design of favouring the equal division of landed property among all the children at the death of a proprietor. But this will not correspond with your reiterated charge that we contemplated a division "among the poor of the land of the rich." What you now affect to consider to be our object is the division of the land of the rich equally among the children of the rich. I must bring the question to the test of your own language.

In your leading article of December 3, you alleged that the small states of the Continent regarded a congress with the "satisfaction with which the poor might regard Mr. Bright's proposition for dividing among them the lands of the rich." I now infer, from your

1863.
ÆT. 59.

new interpretation, that I am asked to construe this as meaning only the satisfaction with which the children of rich landowners would regard a proposition for dividing among them the lands of their fathers.

Again, in your letter to me of December 7 you stated, "These speeches are discussed elaborately in two leading articles on successive days, and in each of them certain passages are interpreted as recommending a *repartition of the land among the poor*." Now, the word partition or repartition means simply a division, and not a bequest or inheritance, and yet, with our dictionaries at hand, you now ask me to interpret the "repartition of the land among the poor," as only meaning that Mr. Bright and I wished to compel rich landowners at their death to leave their estates equally among all their children. And in your letter to me of December 11 you "repeat" the assertion that "certain passages" of our speeches "bear no other interpretation than that ascribed to them." Now up to that date you had put no other interpretation on those speeches than that they advocated the "division of the land of the rich among the poor." The poor we are now told to interpret to mean only the children of rich landowners!

Then, I suppose, we are expected to forget that you coupled us with Gracchus, and the agrarian system of Rome.

No; in the teeth of all these proofs in plain, unmistakable English to the contrary, I should be sacrificing truth to courtesy were I to affect to concur in this new version of your language, which does not admit of two meanings.

This was sufficiently pungent; but it was not the most decisive blow. On the evening of the day on which he wrote the above letter, Cobden found in the *Daily News* what it is odd that he should not have sought earlier, namely, a passage from one of the previous articles in the *Times* to which Mr.

1863. Æt. 59.

Delane had referred. "This language," the *Times* had said (Nov. 26), "so often repeated, and so calculated to excite discontent among the poor and half-informed, *has really only one intelligible meaning.* 'Reduce the electoral franchise; for when you have done so you will obtain an assembly which will *seize* on the estates of the proprietors of land, and *divide them gratuitously among the poor.*' . . . It may be right to reduce the franchise, *but certainly not as a step to spoliation.*"

Now, said Cobden, "you will at once perceive that unless this language be unreservedly recalled, it makes the statement in your last letter simply a mockery and an untruth." Mr. Delane, declaring that the passage taken without its context does not convey the same meaning as when taken with it, and enclosing a copy of the article in full, then begged to retire from the personal part of the controversy.

There can now be very little difference of opinion among candid men as to the merits of the controversy. It is hardly possible to deny two propositions: first, that the interpretation by the *Times* of what had been said at Rochdale was plainly unjust, heedless, and calumnious; second, that Mr. Delane's attempt to explain away the imputation of violence and spoliation was wholly unsuccessful. No editor ever stumbled into a more palpable scrape, nor chose a less fortunate way out of it. The simple and manly course which the Editor of the *Times* ought to have taken was to say something of this kind:—"My article was written in good faith. It is possible, however, that the writer may have been led by certain conscious or unconscious prepossessions against the speakers to read something in Mr. Bright's speech and in yours which was not literally there. I now see, looking at the speeches more carefully, that your

words could not bear the construction that was put upon them, and that your complaint is justified. I will, as Editor, publicly retract an imputation which I now perceive to have been erroneous." 1863. ÆT. 59.

As this apology was not forthcoming, Cobden was entirely justified in publicly seizing Mr. Delane by name, and fixing upon him personally the misdemeanour for which he contumaciously made himself answerable. Anonymous journalism may be tolerated and defended on account of certain incidental conveniences—Cobden himself wrote plenty of anonymous articles—but the system cannot be invoked to protect the writer or the conductor of a public print from liability to be called publicly to account in case of persistent and proved misrepresentation. On the other hand, it can hardly be denied that Cobden put himself in the wrong by accusing the conductors of the *Times* of corruption. When he talked of the "corrupt advantages" of servility to the Government, he made an imputation which he could not prove (as he found out when he tried to get up a case for Parliament), and which was in fact not justified. The conductors of the *Times* did not praise the friends and abuse the enemies of the Government, in order to have one of their contributors sent to the Bahamas, or another made a magistrate at Bow Street. The *Times* was Palmerstonian because the country was Palmerstonian, just as by and by it became Derbyite because the country seemed Derbyite. It condemned the talk of Cobden and Mr. Bright about the land, because the capitalists and the country gentlemen and the great nobles were frightened out of their senses by such talk. The conductor of a newspaper is entirely at liberty to choose what constituency he will attract. It pleased the *Times* at that day to domesticate itself,

1863. Æt. 59.

it was said, among the aristocracy. This may have been a very narrow and ignoble policy, but Mr. Delane had as much right to prefer to spend his evenings among dukes and bishops as Cobden had to spend his among manufacturers and merchants. One thing he had not a right to do, and that was to fasten upon public men propositions which it was his business to know that they had never made.

That the *Times* was wrong upon some of the greatest questions of Cobden's time is quite clear. How wrong it was upon the Russian War, the China War, the American Civil War, everybody knows. But let us be just. If the *Times* was wrong, so was the country. The newspaper only said what the directing classes of the country said. Cobden's own letters to his friends show as much as this. The *Times* was, in fact, the natural exponent of all those old ideas of national policy which Cobden was bent on overthrowing. Just like the Athenian Sophist, the newspaper taught the conventional prejudices of those who paid for it. It is as if, says Socrates of the Sophist and his public, a man had observed the appetites of a great and powerful beast, how to approach it, why it is furious or calm, what tones soothe and what tones irritate it. Like the Sophist, the newspaper reflects the morality, the intelligence, the tone of sentiment, of its public. If the latter is vicious, so is the former.

As it happened, a great organ in the penny Press treated Cobden, as he thought, even worse than if its price had been threepence. The *Daily Telegraph* declined to print Cobden's letter to Mr. Delane, from a rather unctuously expressed tenderness for Cobden's reputation; but though it suppressed his letter, it published some very unfriendly comments on it. Cobden protested against this with much vivacity.

1863.
ÆT. 59.

The merciful haze of time has effaced the interest of much of his letter, but some portion of it is relevant to still unsettled questions in the constitution of the literary priesthood.

The question concerns the Government on one side, and the leading London journal on the other. Does not that affect the public? Is the disposal of Government patronage—the appointment to posts which the public pay—a private or personal question? Recollect, I repeat, that the entire controversy between us is—whether or not the subject should be shrouded in secrecy. It is not the question of anonymous writing that is in debate. *That* is only the red herring drawn across the true scent. We all write anonymously, more or less. The only objection is to the masked literary assassin. Nor is it a question whether writers for the Press have a right to their share of public appointments; nobody denies it. I do not even say that the stream of patronage ought not to flow to the *Times* office; I only contend that it should not run underground.

Far from thinking that the class of whom we are speaking should be excluded from the public service, I form a very high estimate of the fitness for legislative and administrative function, of those who write for the political instruction of the people. And it is on this account that, while I deny to no one the right of an honest *incognito*, I regret that the prevalent, and perhaps unavoidable habit of anonymous writing in the metropolis, should entomb, for all practical political purposes, so much of our best intellect, and rob society of the full development of that individuality, which, more than all besides, is essential to the progress and elevation of our species. In the provinces, the anonymous system has, practically, up to a very recent period, never been in operation; because, there, every man's occupation was more or less known to his neighbours. And, if space permitted, I could trace the salutary effect of this on the political progress of the last generation; for it would

1863. ÆT. 59.

be easy to adduce the names of half a score of men, the conductors of journals in Leeds, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, etc. etc., to whose able, honest, and energetic efforts, as leaders of public opinion in their several localities, more than probably any other traceable cause, the nation is indebted for its successful resistance to that reactionary spirit, which, from the end of the last century, down to 1820, ran its course of tyrannical repression, and filled all but the stoutest hearts with despair. These men have all passed away, but they should not be forgotten. And if, when my friend Dr. Smiles, himself a distinguished member of the fraternity, shall have completed his biographies of our great discoverers, and improvers in physical science, he should give us a volume of the lives of those pioneers of political progress, it will be seen that their triumphs are traceable to something more than an investment of capital in presses and type, with an impersonal editorial staff,—that they were in each case due to the open and avowed writing, and the personal example of the individual man, who was living in clear daylight, under the full gaze of his neighbours, whom he was not only stimulating, but leading in the path of duty, and by whom he was in turn cheered and sustained. I might also, if space allowed, refer to the advantages which open and avowed journalism might afford to the electoral body, in the choice of representatives to Parliament. Those members of the House of Commons connected with the public Press, who have been elected during my experience, and who, with the exception of the first-named, were connected with provincial journals,—Messrs. Miall, Baines, Macguire, Fagan, Lucas, and others,—whatever may be the differences of opinion as to their views, will be acknowledged by all who have sat with them, as having been, in every case, among the foremost of their party, for political intelligence and honour.

I have said enough to show that I take a more exalted view than most men, of the mission of those

1863.
ÆT. 59.

who instruct the public through the newspaper Press, and that, while asserting their title to the most honourable posts, I am assailing only a system by which they are huddled clandestinely into inferior employments, as the result of a secret and illicit intercourse with the Government of the day. And I revert to the question —has not the country a right to be informed, on my responsibility, that this illicit intercourse has been carried on between the *Times* and the Government; and is the *Daily Telegraph* justified in intercepting from the public, so far as lies in its power, all knowledge of the fact, on the plea that it is a personal matter?

Here we may leave the subject, merely remarking that to the present writer it seems that the word "illicit" in the letter is entirely misplaced and unintelligible. There was only one way of effectually checking the excessive authority of a journal which had abused it; this was to encourage the establishment of competitors. Cobden did as much towards this desirable end as any one, by his share in the reduction of the Paper Duty, which was what made the cheap Press possible. The multiplication of newspapers and periodicals has had the further effect of clearing away the old charlatanry and the mystery of authorship and editorship. The names of all important journalists are now coming to be practically as well known as the names of important Members of Parliament, and this change has naturally been followed by that more careful sense of responsibility which Cobden was quite right in insisting upon.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE DANISH WAR—LAST SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT —CORRESPONDENCE

1864. Æt. 60.

It was truly said by a member of the House of Commons at the time, that if the session of 1864 were remembered at all twenty years afterwards, it would only be remembered for the answer which it gave to the question, Shall or shall not England take part in the struggle between Germany and Denmark? This entitles it to a notable place in any account of Cobden. The answer that was then given was as remarkable a triumph for Cobden's principles, as the result of the Don Pacifico debate had been a victory for Lord Palmerston fourteen years before. The great wave of Nationality which was the moving force in Europe for so many years after the storm of 1848, now swept into Schleswig-Holstein, and brought Danes and Germans into violent collision. We may here content ourselves with Cobden's own account of what he justly called that most complicated of all questions. "In 1852," he said, "by the mischievous activity of our Foreign Office, seven diplomatists were brought round a green table in London to settle the destinies of a million of people in the two provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, without the slightest reference to the wants and wishes or the tendencies or the interests of that people. The preamble of the

1864. ÆT. 60.

treaty which was there and then agreed to stated that what those seven diplomatists were going to do was to maintain the integrity of the Danish monarchy, and to sustain the balance of power in Europe. Kings, Emperors, Princes were represented at that meeting, but the people had not the slightest voice or right in the matter. They settled the treaty, the object of which was to draw closer the bonds between those two provinces and Denmark. The tendency of the great majority of the people of those provinces—about a million of them altogether—was altogether in the direction of Germany. From that time to this year the treaty was followed by constant agitation and discord; two wars have sprung out of it, and it has ended in the treaty being torn to pieces by two of the Governments who were prominent parties to the treaty."[1]

The question was whether England should go to the aid of the weak Power against the two strong ones. Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell were in favour of vigorous intervention both before the war broke out, and after the failure of the London Conference. They undoubtedly encouraged Denmark to resist. They were held back by colleagues, against whose timidity the two veterans bitterly murmured to one another.[2] When the London Conference broke up, there was a universal apprehension that the active party in the Cabinet would still carry the day, and that Great Britain would find herself committed without an ally to the terrible peril of a war with Germany.

"At the end of June," as Cobden described it, "the Prime Minister announced that he was going to produce the protocols, and to state the decision

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 341.

[2] Mr. Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. 437-438.

1864. ÆT. 60.

of the Government upon the question. He gave a week's notice of this intention, and then I witnessed what has convinced me that we have achieved a revolution in our foreign policy. The whippers-in—you know what I mean—those on each side of the House who undertake to take stock of the number and the opinions of their followers—the whippers-in during the week were taking soundings of the inclination of members of the House of Commons. And then came up from the country such a manifestation of opinion against war, that day after day during that eventful week member after member from the largest constituencies went to those who acted for the Government in Parliament, and told them distinctly that they would not allow war on any such matters as Schleswig and Holstein. Then came surging up from all the great seats and centres of manufacturing and commercial activity one unanimous veto upon war for this matter of Schleswig and Holstein."[1] The result was that when Lord Palmerston came down to the House on that memorable afternoon of the 27th of June, it was to make the profoundly satisfactory, but profoundly humiliating announcement, that there was to be no war. They had ascertained, he said, that France declined to take any active part in support of Denmark. They had ascertained that Russia would take no part. The whole brunt of the effort requisite for dislodging the German troops would fall upon this country alone. Under these circumstances, they had not thought it consistent with their duty to advise the Sovereign to undertake the task. Lord Palmerston wound up his statement by menaces of great things to be done by the Government if Prussia and Austria went a step further in certain possible directions. These curiously

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 344.

1864.
ÆT. 60.

hollow and ill-timed threats were received with loud shouts of derision, and Mr. Disraeli had the whole House with him when he denounced them as spiritless and senseless. He had the House with him when he went on to say that judging from the past, he would prefer that the affairs of the country should be conducted on the principles of the Member for Rochdale and the Member for Birmingham. In that case the consequences might be the same, but the position of England would be more consistent and more dignified. At least these two gentlemen would threaten nobody; at least they would not have told Denmark that if she were attacked she would not find herself alone; at least they would not have exasperated Germany by declaiming in the full Parliament of England against the "aggravated outrages" of her policy; at least they would not have lured Denmark on by delusive counsels and fallacious hopes.

When in course of time Mr. Disraeli moved a vote of censure, Cobden did not let the opportunity slip. The inherent strength of his position made his speech even more free than usual from bitterness or personality. It was felt that the humiliating breakdown of the Foreign Office, and the meddling and impotent diplomacy of which Lord Palmerston was now the traditional representative, was a complete justification of the great principles of non-intervention as he had preached them for a whole generation. For the last time, as it was destined to be, he pressed home the old arguments for taking all reasonable and possible precautions for avoiding Continental quarrels. "Our country," he said, "requires peace. Some people think it is very degrading, very base, that an Englishman should speak of his country as requiring peace, and as

1864. Æt. 60.

being entitled to enjoy its blessings; and if we allude to our enormous commercial and industrial engagements as a reason why we should avoid these petty embroilments, we are told that we are selfish and grovelling in our politics. But I say we were very wrong to take such measures as were calculated to extend our commerce, unless we were prepared to use prudential precautions to keep our varied manufacturing and mercantile operations free from the mischiefs of unnecessary war. You have in this country engagements of the most extensive and complicated kind. You have extended your operations during the last twenty-five years to such a degree, that you are now actually exporting three times as much as you did twenty-five years ago—that is, your foreign commerce, and the manufactures on which it depends, have grown in a quarter of a century twice as much as they grew in a thousand years before."—(July 5.)

Lord Robert Cecil, who followed him in the debate, observed caustically that though Cobden was about to support the Government against the vote of censure, his enthusiasm for them was not very warm. The Member for Rochdale, he said, was about as good a friend of Her Majesty's Government, as Her Majesty's Government had been of the kingdom of Denmark; there was, however, the remarkable difference between the two cases, that whereas the Government gave to Denmark abundance of good words but no material aid, the honourable member was about to give the Government all his material aid, while he accompanied it with a full dose of what certainly could not be called fair words. When the division was taken, the Government won by a majority of eighteen, but Lord Palmerston must have felt that the policy of Free Trade had, among many

other changes which it had wrought, finally taken the supreme control of peace and war out of the hands of the old territorial oligarchy. 1864. Æt. 60.

Cobden made two other elaborate speeches in the course of the session. One was introductory of a series of resolutions on a subject on which he had long entertained strong views, the great extension of Government manufacturing establishments. In this, as in his views on the greater subject of Free Trade, Cobden was able to quote the illustrious authority of Burke in favour of the principle which he was now advocating, that the Government should not be allowed to manufacture for itself any article which could be obtained from private producers in a competitive market.[1] The other important speech had been made earlier in the session, and carried his views of foreign policy into a field where their application was becoming, and has remained, more urgently necessary than it was even in the sphere of continental Europe. He moved a resolution to the effect that the policy of non-intervention by force of arms in the internal political affairs of foreign countries, which we profess to observe in Europe and America, should also be observed in our intercourse with the Empire of China.[2] What gave special point to the resolution was the fact that at this time we were in danger of repeating the same violence and the same impolicy which had worked such confusion in China, in forcing intercourse upon the people of Japan. Now, as on many occasions before, Cobden showed his sense of the danger that the cry for new markets might become as mischievous

[1] This excellent speech, which was Cobden's last performance in the House of Commons, is to be found in *Hansard*, clxxvi. July 22, 1864; and in Mr. Rogers's *Selection of Speeches*, i. 577.

[2] May 31, 1864.

1864. Æt. 60.

as the old cry for extended dominion. The enormous expansion of manufacturing industry had made some of the commercial class as ready to use violence in opening fresh fields for the sake of gain, as the aristocracy had ever been to use it in satisfying their national pride or military ambition. Cobden's demonstration of the perils which lie before us on this side, and he was not ashamed to consider moral as well as material perils, still remains as apt and as timely as it was in his own day.

Cobden wrote his longest letters at this time to Mr. Sumner and M. Chevalier. He protested, as we see, against the early tendencies of his American friend, to imitate the worst faults of the worst kind of European diplomacy; and to his French friend he put a question as to what might happen in 1870, which subsequent events made curiously significant.

To Mr. Sumner

Character of President Lincoln.

"*Jan.* 7.—You will soon begin to busy yourselves with the task of President-making. I hope you will re-elect Mr. Lincoln. He is rising in reputation in Europe apart from the success of the North. He possesses great moral qualities, which in the long run tell more on the fortunes of the world in these days than mere intellect. I always thought his want of enlarged experience was a disadvantage to him. But he knows his own countrymen evidently, and that is the main point. And being a stranger to the rest of the world, he has the less temptation to embark in foreign controversies or quarrels. Nothing shows his solid sense more than the pertinacity with which he avoids all outside complications. His truthful elevation of character, and his somewhat

1864.
Æt. 60.

stolid placidity of nature, put it quite beyond the power of other Governments to fasten a quarrel on him, and inspire the fullest confidence in those who are committing themselves to the side of the North. I say all this on the assumption that he has irrevocably committed himself to 'abolition' as the result of the war. Any compromise on that question would cover your cause with external infamy, and render the sanguinary civil war with which you have desolated the North and South a useless butchery."

The American War.

"*Midhurst, Aug.* 18, 1864.—I still look forward with unabated confidence to the triumph of the North. But I begin to speculate on the effect which the failure of Grant's campaign may have on your politics. Sometimes I speculate on the possibility of your imitating the course which political parties often follow here, and that your Democrats, who appear to be for peace, may come into power, and carry out even more successfully than your party could do the policy of war and abolition of slavery. Like Peel in his course on Free Trade and Catholic Emancipation, they would have the advantage of being sure of the support of the honest advocates of the policy they adopted, even although they were nominally in the ranks of their political opponents. What I most dread is your falling into political confusion in the North! That would be a severe blow to the principle of self-government everywhere."

To M. Chevalier

Garibaldi's Visit to London.

"*May* 3, 1864.—I thought you were now sufficiently acquainted with England not to attach undue

1864. Æt. 60.

importance to the Garibaldi affair, in so far as our Ministers are concerned.[1] They, of course, were only acting a political part in order to catch a little of the popularity which for the moment surrounded the Italian hero. You do not, of course, suppose that Palmerston entertains any views in common with Garibaldi. It would be difficult indeed to show that he has any views at all beyond the wish to hold office by flattering the popular passions of the hour. The people were quite sincere in the homage they offered to the Italian.[2] They believe in his honesty and disinterestedness, and they know him to be a good *fighter*! There is a certain antique picturesqueness about the man too which attracts the sight-loving multitude. But there are perhaps other reasons why the middle classes share the enthusiasm of the populace. They believe him to be an enemy of the Pope, and you know what ardent Protestants we are! The Dukes and Duchesses took possession of Garibaldi to keep him out of the hands of the democrats, and when they had finished fêting him, they sent him straight home to Caprera in a Duke's yacht. It was expected that he would make a tour

[1] Garibaldi arrived in England on April 3. The wild enthusiasm with which he was received by the densest masses that ever attended a procession in London, made the Government uncomfortable. By some intrigue, the great hero of the European Revolution was hurried out of the country in the Duke of Sutherland's yacht.

[2] "*London, May* 10. (*To Mr. T. B. Potter.*)— . . . The working people in the metropolis are very proud of *their* reception of Garibaldi, and those of the provinces are hoping for another opportunity of fêting him.

"When will the masses of this country begin to think of home politics? Our friend Bright observed, as he gazed from a window in Parliament Street on the tens of thousands that cheered the Italian, 'If the people would only make a few such demonstrations for themselves, we could do something for them.' But nothing except foreign politics seems to occupy the attention of the people, Press, or Parliament."

1864.
Æt. 60.

in the north of England, and all arrangements had been made to receive him in Manchester, Newcastle, and other places. But it was feared by his aristocratic acquaintances in London that if he went to the provinces he might be talking too revolutionarily and so he was persuaded to go away home, greatly to the disgust of the country democrats, who consider themselves 'done.' All this is merely the play of our political game, in which the so-called statesmen and Ministers of the Crown do not act a very dignified part. The affairs of the Conference are not very promising. It seems that we are to be thankful that France and England are not on better terms. Last autumn France was apparently willing to go to war with Russia for Poland, and England declined. Now England seems to be desirous of going to war with Germany for Denmark, and France declines! So we have preserved peace in consequence of the suspension of the *entente cordiale*."

Free Trade in France.

"27 *Victoria Street, Westminster, June* 27.—I ought to have written to you more promptly, to thank you for the very kind invitation conveyed in your last letter. Be assured that it would give my wife and me very great pleasure to come and pay Madame Chevalier and you a long family visit in the Hérault. I am, however, afraid it will not be in my power to avail myself of your friendly offer of hospitality. In the present state of my health I am obliged to look forward to the possibility of being compelled to go abroad in the *winter*. You know that the climate of England from May to October is the finest in the world, and gives no excuse for the invalid to leave home. I must therefore remain

1864. Æt. 60.

with my family in the summer, in the fear that my health may compel me to go to the South in the winter. I should be delighted to have the opportunity of passing a few weeks with you. Among other matters we could talk over the progress of Free Trade in France. I confess I am not satisfied that you do not continue to make further reforms, if only to guard against reaction in those already made. Time is passing. It is now four years since we arranged your tariff. Are you sure that in 1870 you will be so completely under the Free Trade *régime* as to prevent the Government of that day (God knows what it may be) from going back to protection after the Anglo-French Treaty expires.

"We are in a critical political situation here. It is not easy to say what will happen in a week or two in the House. The Whigs are in a very sorry plight. But the Tories are so stupid that they seem hardly capable of profiting by the blunders of their opponents. The Opposition is to meet to-morrow at Lord Derby's, to consider the next step. If they move a resolution implying censure on the Government for not having gone to war, they will not be supported by a majority of the House, for both sides are very much opposed to war in behalf of the Danes. I have been much struck with this pacific sentiment in both parties. It is quite different from what it was previous to the Crimean War."

Tone of English Politics.

"*Midhurst, Nov.* 5.—I am glad to hear that you and Madame Chevalier are returning in good health to Paris. It is a long time since we exchanged letters. But I have been vegetating here ever since the close of the session of Parliament, and have had

1864. Æt. 60.

no news to communicate to distant friends. I have not yet made up my mind whether I shall leave home for a more sunny region this winter. It will depend on my health and the temperature of our English winter. I do not contemplate in any case going to Africa. It may be necessary for me to go to Southern Europe. But I confess I have a great repugnance to making a journey of a thousand miles merely on an errand of health.

"I have received the *Débats* with its article on the Metric system. We have made a first step; but when I think with what Chinese slowness we march in the path of reform, it makes me despair of living to see this useful change carried into effect.

"Our politics are very stagnant. How could they be otherwise? . . . But there is one great change amounting to a revolution which has been accomplished in our foreign policy. After the fiasco of last session on the Danish question, our Foreign Office will never again attempt to involve us in any European entanglements for the Balance of Power, or for any dynastic purpose. Henceforth we shall observe an absolute abstention from Continental politics. Non-intervention is the policy of all future Governments in this country. So let the Grand Turk take care of himself, for we shall never fight his battle again. Until the American War is at an end we shall not recover our natural tone of politics in this country. I am still convinced the South will have to succumb. The geographical difficulties of separation have always appeared to me to be insurmountable. The mouth of the Mississippi alone is enough to prevent Jeff Davis from establishing his slave empire. It would be easier to establish an 'East Anglia' by the secession of Kent and Essex at the mouth of the Thames, than to set up an

1864. Æt. 60.

independent State in Louisiana. It is not a question ever to be discussed. It is an impossibility. Have you not like myself been astonished at the financial resources of the North? I have just seen a pamphlet recently published in Washington by Mr. Blodget on the financial and industrial resources of the Union. I have been astounded by the facts and figures it gives from Government returns, railway traffics, etc., showing the almost incredible and fabulous *increase* of every kind of production in the Northern States during the last three years of war. It is quite clear that America stands on a different footing from the old world, and that its powers, whether in peace or war, are to be measured by a different standard. In comparing their powers of endurance or recovery, we must consider the one to be a man of twenty-five and the other of sixty. . . ."

To Henry Ashworth, Esq.

International Law.

"*Sept.* 3.—The great fallacy that runs through Roundell Palmer's arguments is in the assumption that 'International Law' is a fixed and immutable code like the Ten Commandments, and that it would be wrong in us now to set up any new precedents or innovations. Now the whole of what is called International Maritime Law is mere precedents, generally emanating from our own Courts, and then adopted by the Americans *in times and circumstances quite different from the present.*

"We agreed to a fundamental change in the bases of the Maritime Code at the Congress of Paris after the Crimean War in 1856, and the great error has been that we did not seize the opportunity of

1864.
Æt. 60.

the American War to still further relax the old system in the interests of non-combatants at sea. Instead of which Roundell Palmer, who is a lawyer and not a statesman, has been put forward as the exponent of British policy, and he has laid down principles which will tell fearfully against us at a future time. . . . The declaration of Paris in 1856 *against privateering* becomes a mere pretentious hoax, when we see that ships such as the *Georgia* and *Tallahassee* are recognized as ships of war, merely because they carry a bit of paper called a 'Commission' instead of one called a 'Letter of Marque.' It is most important that you should disabuse our shipowners of their delusion that this declaration against privateering will be of any benefit to them after such precedents as we are now establishing in the event of our being at war."

The Law of Blockade.

"*Sept.* 9.—The Blockade Laws are about as rascally an invention as the Old Corn Laws. Suppose Tom Sayers lived in a street, and on the opposite side lived a shopkeeper with whom he has been in the habit of dealing. Tom quarrels with his shopkeeper and forthwith sends him a challenge to fight, which is accepted. Tom, being a powerful man, sends word to each and every householder in the street that he is going to fight the shopkeeper, and that until he has finished fighting, no person in the street must have any dealings with the shopkeeper. 'We have nothing to do with your quarrel,' say the inhabitants, 'and you have no right to stop our dealings with the shopkeeper.'

"The argument is just as good on a large scale as on a small one—for fifty millions as for one person. The various Governments of England have

1864. Æt. 60.

been the chief and almost only supporters of the Blockade Laws, and no nation on earth will be so much injured by them, not to say a word of their injustice. The sooner the Blockade Laws follow the Corn and Navigation Laws, the better it will be for all nations, and for England in particular."

The Danish War.

"*July* 1.— . . . The House of Commons is remarkably pacific. I have been much struck with the all but universal feeling among members on both sides against going to war on this Danish question. I really don't believe there are fifty men in the House, who, if their votes were to decide the question, would vote for war. It is the more remarkable inasmuch as the Press had been very warlike, and full of threats and braggadocio. There was a section of the Cabinet quite ready to *do anything* for popularity. But the whipper-in carried such a report of the tone of the House, as to decide the Government to do nothing.

"I attribute this remarkable change in the temper of the House since the Crimean War to the enormous amount of material interests at stake.

"We are exporting now at the rate of £160,000,000 a year, threefold our trade twenty years ago. This must have given an immense force to the Conservative peace principles of the country. The House of Commons represents the wealth of the country though not its numbers, and I have no doubt the members hear from all the great seats of our commercial ship-owning and manufacturing industries that the busy prosperous people there wish to be at peace. This is one of the effects which we advocates of Free Trade always predicted and desired as the

consequence of extended commercial operations. But the manner in which the principle is now operating is most remarkable. . . ." 1864. ÆT. 60.

"*July* 26.— . . . I am glad you liked my last speeches. One has more and more the painful impression that it is after all mere barren talk. I do not see how any material improvement in public affairs is possible, so long as this old man at the head can contrive to use all parties for his own ends. With Gladstone and Gibson for his colleagues, and with a tacit connivance from a section of the Tories, there can be no honesty in our party life and little chance for ridding ourselves of the incubus, excepting with the aid of Time, which I suppose will enforce a superannuation upon the old gentleman some day.

"It would have given me very great enjoyment to have visited you at your Highland box, but I go quietly among my children at Dunford during the fine weather, for I always feel under the liability of being induced to leave home for a southern clime in the winter. During the session I see little of my young people, and I really think it is as healthful as it is pleasant to relax after the turmoil of the House and the clubs among the minds of children. I remember hearing Wakley say in the House when O'Connell first showed symptoms of giving way, that if he would withdraw from politics and live with his grandchildren, he might last for ten years. But he died in a twelvemonth."

CHAPTER XXXVII

SPEECH AT ROCHDALE—THE LAND QUESTION—CORRESPONDENCE—LAST DAYS AND DEATH

1864. Æt. 60.

In November Cobden went down to Rochdale to make his annual speech to his constituents. He was not in very good spirits when he started, and the exertion of travelling and of speaking to an enormous audience lowered his powers still further. It was the largest meeting on one floor that he had ever attended. The speech itself is one of his longest.[1] Mr. Bright, who was absent at Leamington, said that when he read it, he marvelled how Cobden could have made such a speech when times were so dull. Besides being one of his longest, it is perhaps the one that gives the best idea of his manner, and opens the easiest view to his theory of the foreign policy which is proper for Great Britain in her existing circumstances. We see in it to perfection what Mr. Disraeli commended in him, that careful art of avoiding to drive his arguments to an extremity, which was one of the secrets of his singular persuasiveness.

It was in this speech that he made the memorable declaration on the Land Question. We have already seen (above, p. 434) what he said the year before in the same place: that the English peasantry had

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 339, November 23, 1864.

1864. ÆT. 60.

no parallel on the face of the earth; that there is no other country in the world where the peasantry is entirely divorced from the land.[1] He now said: — "If I were five-and-twenty or thirty, instead of being unhappily twice that number of years, I would take Adam Smith in hand—I would not go beyond him, I would have no politics in it—I would take Adam Smith in hand, and I would have a League for free trade in land, just as we had a League for free trade in corn. You will find just the same authority in Adam Smith for one as for the other; and if it were taken up, as it must be taken up to succeed, not as a political, revolutionary, Radical, Chartist notion, but taken up on politico-economical grounds, the agitation would be certain to succeed."[2] What it was that he precisely meant by free trade in land he did not more particularly specify. His reference to Adam Smith is enough to show that he contemplated the abolition of entails and other artificial means of tying land up in long settlements; and like all men of sense, he constantly advocated improved facilities in the machinery of transfer. How much further he was prepared to go, we cannot tell; but there is no evidence that, in England and Scotland, he was inclined to favour the French system of compulsory partition, and there is abundant evidence that he was not likely to sympathize with any of the vague projects for what their authors call the nationalization of the land. On the other hand, it is probable that he would have been friendly to the legislative recognition, not only in Ireland but in Great Britain, of the principle of Tenant Right. In one of the most effective of his speeches in the time of the Corn Law, which has

[1] *Speeches*, ii. 116.

[2] *Speeches*, ii. 367. See *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. iii. chap. ii.

1864. Æt. 60.

been already referred to (see vol. i. p. 343), he insisted upon security of tenure as the first condition of prosperity alike to landlord, tenant, and labourer. This security he expected to find in leases, that should contain none of those restrictive covenants which now so constantly hamper the tenant in the manner of applying his capital and carrying on his business. Perhaps he might have been persuaded that leases themselves are found by the people concerned to be a practical impediment to the free movement of capital; and in this way might have come round to such a form of legislative Tenant Right as would give the security of a lease without involving an inconveniently long duration. However this may be, we have as a matter of fact no complete scheme of Cobden's views on the English Land Question.[1] His solution of the question of the same name in Ireland, we have already seen (vol. i. pp. 526-528, and above, pp. 16, 66-67). He "would give Ireland to the Irish."

Although the few sentences which concerned a Land League did most to startle attention at the moment, Cobden's last speech dealt much more fully with other topics, and covered a very wide space of political ground. The exhaustion after such an effort was severe. "I should have been well enough," Cobden told Mr. Paulton, "if I could have gone to bed for four-and-twenty hours after the speech. But the next day Mr. Kemp had a reception of two hundred of the leading Liberals,

[1] Mr. Thorold Rogers, who had many conversations with him on the subject, says that by free trade in land Cobden meant "the extension of the principle of free exchange in all its fulness to landed estates, and the removal of all restrictions on its transfer, either voluntarily, should the owner desire to sell it, or involuntarily if the owner becomes embarrassed."—*Cobden and Modern Political Opinion*, chap. iii. p. 89.

1865.
ÆT. 60.

and I spent the whole evening in shaking hands and incessant talking to relays of friends." The journey home made things worse. He was afraid to rest in London, lest he should find himself compelled by illness to remain there. On the whole, when he reached home, he considered that he had escaped tolerably well, but he made up his mind that he must never attend another public meeting in the winter season. As it was, he found that he had suffered more harm than he supposed. Two months after his return he gave the following account of himself to Mr. Paulton :—

"*Jan.* 25.—I have never before had such a shake. I came back from my imprudent trip to the North out of order from top to toe. Besides my old foe (which the doctor here calls 'nervous asthma'), from which my breathing was so obstructed that I could hardly move a limb, I had an attack of bronchitis, which threatened to extend to my lungs, and my stomach was much disordered with feverish symptoms. Our little apothecary was very assiduous, and I am much better. The asthma has entirely disappeared, and I can walk upstairs without any of the old symptoms. But I am thinner, and without air or exercise how can any one be well? I have not been out of doors since I returned home. This cold weather keeps up the old irritation in my throat, and I am not free from cough. In fact what I want is a fortnight of July sunshine. This has been the most disagreeable winter I have ever known here. Generally we get sunshine in the middle of the day, if even for only two or three hours. This year, although the average temperature has not been lower than usual, there have been great fluctuations, with much moisture and cloudiness. At present the ground is covered with snow of unusual depth.

1865. Æt. 60.

"I am deeply obliged to you and Mrs. Paulton for your kind invitation. At present I cannot entertain the idea of going to town. I should not be able to attend the House, and in anything like my present state of health, home is the only proper place for me. Besides there never was a time when so little motive existed to lead a man to run risks of life and health in the fulfilment of his public duties. . . . The talk in official circles is that the election is to take place in June. That is the season of the year which will suit me best. But really what right has anybody to pretend to take the burden of affairs of State on his shoulders, when he has arrived at an age when he can hardly bear the weight of his own infirmities? I ought to give up public life. So nauseous is the present state of parliamentary parties, that if I knew the general election would give the old Premier a renewed rule, I should secretly pray that Mr. Brett[1] would relieve me from the task of being a further witness, if not accomplice, to the imposture!"

His time was filled by vigilant observation of affairs, and by his unfailing practice of correspondence. The struggle in America occupied his thoughts incessantly, partly because he was looking to the questions that would remain for adjustment after the war had come to an end. One of his last letters to Mr. Sumner touched on this point:—

"*Jan.* 11, 1865.—I agree with a remark in the concluding passage of your last letter, that you are fighting the battle of Liberalism in Europe as well as the battle of freedom in America. It is only necessary to observe who are your friends and who your opponents in the Old World, to be satisfied

[1] The present Lord Justice Brett. He was now before the constituency of Rochdale as the Conservative candidate.

1865. ÆT. 60.

that great principles are at stake in your terrible conflict. But it is not by victories in the field alone that you will help the cause of the masses in Europe. End when it may, the Civil War will, in the eyes of mankind, have conferred quite as much 'glory,' so far as mere fighting goes, on the South as on the North. It is in your superiority in other things that you can alone by your example elevate the Old World. I confess I am very jealous of your taking a course which seems to hold up our old doings as an excuse for your present short-comings. Hence I was sorry to see your republication of the old indictment against us in your very able and learned pamphlet. My answer is, that your only title to existence as a Republic is that you are supposed to be superior to what we were sixty years ago. Had you returned the *Florida* to Bahia without a moment's delay, cashiered the captain of the *Wochusett*, and offered to pay for the support of the survivors who were dependent on those who were killed or drowned in that wicked outrage, your friends would have felt some inches taller here. *That* would have been the true answer to the taunts of our Tory Press, and not the disinterment of the misdeeds of our Tory Government to show that they did something almost as bad as the Federal commander.

"I was much pleased with your speech on the Canadian difficulty in the South, when you spoke of avoiding all quarrels with other countries, and devoting yourself to the one sole object of putting down the rebellion. I am not blind to the fact that very grave questions will stand over for adjustment between your country and ours. Some of them, such as the injury done to your whole shipping interest by the losses and destruction of a port, can hardly be

1865. Æt. 60.

settled by Governments. They will, I fear, invite future retaliations on our shipping by citizens of your country, if we should ever go to war. But all these questions must be postponed till your war is ended, and then probably the whole world may be ready for a thorough revolution in international maritime law. It will be for you to show the way."

The topic of national expenditure kept its place in his mind, and the plans for the defence of Canada stirred his liveliest disgust. He expressed his views in two elaborate letters to Mr. Gladstone, with a sort of forlorn hope that they might through him obtain a hearing in the Cabinet. Excepting Mr. Gladstone himself, however, and Mr. Gibson, there was nobody in the Cabinet who felt the least inclination to listen. Even Mr. Gladstone thought that his correspondent did less than justice to the Government, and more than justice to the Canadians. Mr. Bright, meanwhile, was working for their views in a different direction, insisting on the proposition for which he had been fighting ever since the repeal of the Corn Law, that nothing good could be done until the representation was improved. He began the new year with a powerful speech at Birmingham, to Cobden's great satisfaction :—

"*Jan.* 16. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I see your meeting at Birmingham is fixed. You will, I suppose, have something to say about Reform. What is wanted is to slay and bury those delusive projects which have of late owed their existence to men who wish to mystify the simple question of principle, and lead the public astray after crotchety details of their own. Of these Lord Grey and Buxton are the most notable. But I suppose you are aware that Stuart Mill has endorsed Hare's incomprehensible scheme. It is a pity that Mill, who on the whole is so admirable in his

1865.
ÆT. 60.

sympathies and tendencies, should give his sanction to these novelties. (I got a letter the other day from an old Leaguer in Australia, saying that the Protectionists there are quoting Mill to justify a young community in resorting for a time to Protection.) It has always appeared to me that the best way to meet the wishes of those who honestly fear that particular classes or bodies of the community may be unrepresented, is to make the electoral districts as diversified as possible. With this view I would allow each constituency to return one representative. Thus, for instance, if Birmingham had six members, they should be elected by six wards. This would give every section of the community the opportunity of suiting itself. The idea of giving representation to minorities is an absurdity. It strikes at the very foundations of representative government by majorities. It ignores the fact that *opinion* is always represented by minorities as well as majorities, or why should there be party divisions at all?[1]

[1] The last letter that Cobden wrote was on this subject. It was addressed a week before his death (March 22, 1865) to Mr. T. B. Potter, who had sent him a letter from Mr. Mill:—"Everything from him is entitled to respectful consideration. But I confess, after the best attention to the proposed representation of minorities which I can give it, I am so stupid as to fail to see its merits. He speaks of 50,000 electors having to elect five members, and that 30,000 may elect them all, and to obviate this he would give the 20,000 minority two votes. But I would give only one vote to each elector, and one representative to each constituency. Instead of the 50,000 returning five in a lump, I would have five constituencies of 10,000, each returning one member. Thus, if the metropolis, for example, were entitled, with a fair distribution of electoral power, to 40 votes, I would divide it into 40 districts or wards, each to return one member; and in this way every class and every variety of opinion would have a chance of a fair representation. Belgravia, Marylebone, St. James's, St. Giles's, Whitechapel, Spitalfields, etc., would each and all have their members. I don't know any better plan for giving all opinions

1865. Æt. 60.

"Has it ever occurred to you to ascertain what was the old borough franchise? In Forster's *Life of Eliot*, giving a very detailed account of the parliamentary and constitutional struggle between the House of Commons and Charles I., at the period antecedent to the revolutionary conflict, there are constant notices of trials before Parliamentary Committees to decide the question whether the right of voting belonged to the 'commonalty in general,' or to privileged corporations or classes. The decisions seem to have been almost always in favour of the 'commonalty in general.' By this phrase I suppose was meant all householders at least. I daresay the polling-papers are preserved of the old elections, and it would be curious to see the proportions the voters bore to the whole population. I see it stated that in 1628 there was a contested election for Coventry, when the successful candidates had a majority of 600 votes. There must have been a much larger proportion of the whole population voting then than is polled now.

"I was talking with Durrant Cooper, one of the leading members of our Sussex Archæological Society, and told him if instead of devoting a volume a year to the remains of old castles and monasteries, they would give us some facts throwing light upon the social and political condition of the inhabitants in former ages, it would be a much more useful employment of their talents. It is astonishing what a mass of facts of old date are in existence. The secretary of our County Society once said that an

a chance of being heard; and, after all, it is opinions that are to be represented. If the minority have a faith that their opinions, and not those of the majority, are the true ones, then let them agitate and discuss until their principles are in the ascendant. This is the motive for political action and the healthy agitation of public life."

1865.
ÆT. 60.

itinerary of King John's reign, giving his whereabouts every day of his life, could be given if worth the trouble, with as much accuracy as that of William the Fourth.

"I have no recent letters from America. Goldwin Smith says he has come back a confirmed Radical and Free Churchman, and less impatient because more assured of liberal progress. . . . His pen is a power in the State."

"*Jan.* 22. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I hope you have returned safely home, and if you are well after your double effort at Birmingham, I congratulate you on your bronchial organization. I was satisfied and pleased with your speech in the Town Hall. I think you took a very wise course in using the language of warning to those ruling factions who are alone responsible for the present state of the Reform question. Not that it will have the desired effect in that quarter, where nothing but fear of something worse happening ever leads to the concession of any reform. Unfortunately, in the case of the proposed change in the representation, involving, as our privileged classes believe, the destruction of their privileges, nothing worse than this spectre can be presented to their imagination; and they will contend against a measure which would make the people the depository of political power in this country, as they would against a revolution of the old French model. But you have done your duty in introducing to them the five or six millions who may at any time set their eyes on the portals of the constitution with a demand for admittance which could not be resisted; and you have given them this warning in language with which no one, however fastidious, can quarrel, and yet which nobody can fail to understand. But, after

1865. ÆT. 60.

all, I sometimes think that we almost lend ourselves to an imposture in arguing on these matters, as though we believed we were appealing to a tribunal which could be swayed by appeals to reason and the principles of justice."

Whilst he was in this mood of discouragement, he received a letter from Mr. Gladstone, written (Feb. 10) on behalf of the Government and by desire of Lord Palmerston, offering him the office of Chairman of the Board of Audit. It was proposed to reconstitute the Board, and to strengthen and raise the position of its head; the Comptrollership of the Exchequer was to be united to the Chair of the Board of Audit; and the salary was to be raised to £2000 a year. Although the duties of the office, Mr. Gladstone said, would require very high qualities for their proper discharge, they would not be very laborious. The tender of such an office was not to be taken as an adequate acknowledgment of his distinguished and long-continued public services, but it was the highest civil office which the Government had it in their power to give. After taking a couple of days to think over the proposal, though probably his decision was made at once, Cobden declined it:—

"MIDHURST, *Feb.* 13, 1865.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter written on behalf of the Government, offering in the kindest terms to place at my option the post of Chairman of the Board of Audit, about to be vacated by Mr. Romilly. Owing to the state of my health, I am precluded from taking any office which involves the performance of stated duties at all seasons of the year, or leaves a sense of responsibility for the

fulfilment of those duties by others. I have for some time been liable to recurring attacks, during certain conditions of the atmosphere, of what medical authorities call nervous asthma. While giving me no pain, it disqualifies me for active exertion during its visitations, and I am certain of exemption from it only in warm weather. I cannot live in London during the season of fog and frost. Here there are good and sufficient reasons why I should for the rest of my days be exempt from the cares of salaried official life. But were my case different, still, while sensible of the kind intentions which prompted the offer, it would assuredly not be consulting my welfare to place me in the post in question, with my known views respecting the nature of our finance. Believing, as I do, that while the income of the Government is derived in a greater proportion than in any other country from the taxation of the humblest classes, its expenditure is to the last degree wasteful and indefensible, it would be almost a penal appointment to consign me for the remainder of my life to the task of passively auditing our finance accounts. I fear my health would sicken and my days be shortened by the nauseous ordeal. It will be better that I retain my seat in Parliament as long as I am able in any tolerable degree to perform its duties, where I have at least the opportunity of protesting, however unavailingly, against the Government expenditure. But I am wandering from the text of your kind letter, for which I heartily thank you, especially for the postscript,[1] and I remain,

1865.
ÆT. 60.

"Very truly yours,
"RICHARD COBDEN."

[1] The postscript was to the effect that if he were disposed to talk the matter over, Mr. Gladstone was at his service.

1865. Æt. 60.

In acknowledging the letter, Mr. Gladstone expressed his satisfaction that Cobden so clearly appreciated the spirit in which the offer had been made by the Government, and especially by Lord Palmerston. He went on to add that he did not think the most faithful discharge of the duties of the office would have made the incumbent of it in any sense whatever responsible for the expenditure of the country, or would even have brought it before him in any marked manner in the career of ordinary duty. None of Cobden's friends have ever doubted the propriety of his decision, though it is within the range of possibility that if it had been otherwise his days might have been prolonged.

At this time Mr. Bright wrote to him (Feb. 23), saying that Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald was to talk on Canadian fortifications some day soon. "I wish," Mr. Bright said, "that you could be in the House when he comes on. You understand the details of the question better than any other man in the House, and I think you could knock over the stupid proposition to spend English money in fortifications at Quebec. I shall probably say something if you are not there, but I hope the matter may not be debated till you are in town." A week later, Cobden received the last letter that he was destined to have from his friend. It was a note (March 3), saying by what train Mr. Bright would come down to Midhurst on the following afternoon. Cobden now occasionally ventured out into the air during the middle of the day, and he and Mr. Bright took easy walks together on the terrace at Dunford or in the lanes. On one occasion, looking in the direction of the church, Cobden said, "My boy is buried there, and it will not be long before I am there with him." It was, indeed, little more than a month.

1865.
ÆT. 60.

Three final letters belong to this date:—

"*Feb.* 23. (*To Mr. T. B. Potter.*)—I have forwarded Lord ——'s letter to Mr. Goldwin Smith. I observe that he assigns as the main cause for the hostility of the ruling class (for the masses we know are on the other side) to the North to the fact that the Americans have (previous to the war as well as since) shown a disposition to go to war with us. This is the old indictment, and I have but one answer to it. The United States maintained previous to the outbreak of the Civil War an army of 17,000 men and a navy of 7000, and for ten years previous had never commissioned a line-of-battle ship. Yet in her dealings with England and Europe, with their standing armies of half a million of men, and their navies of scores of line-of-battle ships, the United States carried, we are now told, matters with a high hand! Was there ever a stronger admission of the superiority of moral force and of republicanism? When a Bobadil or a Drawcansir is represented on the stage, he is always armed to the teeth. But here you have an unarmed nation bullying great military and naval powers. Would to Heaven that France, Russia, Austria, England, Italy, and Prussia would follow this fashion of bullying! . . .

"What is running in Lord ——'s head is the common fallacy of confounding the language of certain newspapers and parties in America with the acts of the Government. Is it fair to forget that there are nearly two millions of persons who were born in Ireland living in the United States, and perhaps as many more the offspring of Irish parents, all of whom are animated with the most intense hatred towards England? New York city alone at the last census had 260,000 Irish, actually more

1865. Æt. 60.

than the population of Dublin in 1851, thus making New York the greatest Irish city in the world. These people have their newspapers, their orators, and they have votes. Considering how demonstrative they are, it is not wonderful that their voices are heard at every period of excitement. But what shall be said of the fairness of those Englishmen, who, knowing that the misery and depopulation of Ireland has sprung from centuries of oppression and outrageous injustice on the part of England, follow the Irish to America, and instead of frankly acknowledging that *they* have grounds of resentment towards *us*, fasten their quarrel on the Americans who have given them an asylum!

"Shall I confess the thought that troubles me in connexion with this subject? I have seen with disgust the altered tone with which America has been treated since she was believed to have committed suicide or something like it. In our diplomacy, our Press, and with our public speakers, all hastened to kick the dead lion. Now in a few months everybody will know that the North will triumph, and what troubles me is lest I should live to see our ruling class—which can understand and respect *power* better than any other class—grovel once more, and more basely than before, to the giant of democracy. This would not only inspire me with disgust and indignation, but with shame and humiliation. I think I see signs that it is coming. The *Times* is less insolent and Lord Palmerston is more civil."

"*March* 15. (*To Mr. Bright.*)—I have read through the whole of the debate on Monday. The alteration of tone is very remarkable. It is clear that the homage which was refused to justice and humanity will be freely given to success. No part of your speech was

1865. Æt. 60.

to me more acceptable than where you threw in the parenthetical reflection that the sacrifices of the North were not to put Bourbons on the throne of France or to keep the Turk in Europe. Still, do not let us deceive ourselves. There will be a back reckoning. It is all very well to talk of future peace and goodwill, but the Americans will feel that they have a substantial wrong to redress with this country. In international law (if there be such a thing) a nation is a unit, and the *whole* is responsible to another people for the acts of its individuals. Parties will from this moment be looking for political capital in America to the resentment everywhere felt against our shipbuilders and merchants. There is not an aspirant for the presidency, even including our dear friend Sumner, who will not be ready to take the stump on the ground of 'indemnity to American citizens for losses by the *Alabama*.' I will trust none of their leading politicians except Lincoln, whose political life closes with his next term.

"Now the money question is really the smallest part of the issue between the two countries arising out of the experience we have had of the present state of international maritime law, and the interest we have, beyond all other countries, in altering it. But where is the statesmanship to deal with the problem, when nobody seems to look beyond the exigencies of the next twenty-four hours? I feel confident there can never be a war between us and America. The mass of the people here must every day feel that they have a far higher stake in the United States than in the country of their birth.

"I was glad you brought out so clearly the homestead law. When it is fairly driven home to the apprehension of our dull landless millions that the people of the United States hold the largest and

1865. richest unoccupied domain in the world, not for great feudal monopolists like the Demidoffs or the Sutherlands, not even for the exclusive use of American citizens, but in trust for the landless millions aforesaid, to every one of whom is offered a farm as large as he can cultivate, and a vote six months after his settlement (which is the rule in the West), it will be impossible to marshal in hostile array the masses of this country against that people. But though the governing classes will not be able to involve us in war, they will, I think, if they continue to hold their present rule in this country, bring on us some great humiliation from America, which never could happen if the people as a whole controlled the politics of the State."

ÆT. 60.

"*March* 20. (*To Colonel Cole.*)—The most interesting debate of the session hitherto has been on Canadian affairs. This is a subject of increasing interest, and the projected confederation of the British North American colonies will bring it into great prominence this session. It seems to be generally accepted here as a desirable change, though I fail to discover any immediate interest which the British public have in the matter. There is no proposal to relieve us from the expense and risk of pretending to defend those colonies from the United States—a task which, by the way, everybody admits to be beyond our power. Then I cannot see what substantial interest the British people have in the connexion to compensate them for guaranteeing three or four millions of North Americans living in Canada, etc., against another community of Americans living in their neighbourhood. We are told indeed of the 'loyalty' of the Canadians; but this is an ironical term to apply to people who neither pay our taxes nor obey our laws,

1865.
ÆT. 60.

nor hold themselves liable to fight our battles, who would repudiate our right to the sovereignty over an acre of their territory, and who claim the right of imposing their own Customs duties, even to the exclusion of our manufactures. We are two peoples to all intents and purposes, and it is a perilous delusion to both parties to attempt to keep up a sham connexion and dependence which will snap asunder if it should ever be put to the strain of stern reality. It is all very well for our Cockney newspapers to talk of defending Canada at all hazards. It would be just as possible for the United States to sustain Yorkshire in a war with England, as for us to enable Canada to contend against the United States. It is simply an impossibility. Nor must we forget that the only serious danger of a quarrel between those two neighbours arises from the connexion of Canada with this country. In my opinion it is for the interest of both that we should as speedily as possible sever the political thread by which we are as communities connected, and leave the individuals on both sides to cultivate the relations of commerce and friendly intercourse as with other nations. I have felt an interest in this confederation scheme, because I thought it was a step in the direction of an amicable separation. I am afraid from the last telegrams that there may be some difficulty, either in your province or in Lower Canada, in carrying out the project. Whatever may be the wish of the colonies will meet with the concurrence of our Government and Parliament. We have recognized their right to control their own fate, even to the point of asserting their independence whenever they think fit, and which we know to be only a question of time. All this makes our present responsible position towards them truly one-sided

1865. Æt. 60.

and ridiculous. There seems to be something like a deadlock in the political machinery of the Canadas, which has driven their leading statesmen into the measure of confederation. I suspect that there has been some demoralization and corruption in that quarter, and that it is in part an effort to purify the political system by letting in new blood. There is also, I think, an inherent weakness in the parody of our old English constitution, which is performed on the miniature scenes of the colonial capitals, with their speeches from the throne, votes of confidence, appeals to the country, changes of Ministry, etc., and all about such trumpery issues that the game at last becomes ridiculous in the eyes of both spectators and actors."

A few days after Mr. Bright had left him, Cobden found himself unable to resist the desire to take a part in the discussion on the Canadian fortifications, and on the 21st of March, in bitter weather, he travelled up to London, accompanied by Mrs. Cobden and his second daughter. Instead of going as usual to the house of Mr. Paulton or some other friend, he had taken lodgings in Suffolk Street; it was close to the Athenæum, and as near as he could get to the House of Commons. On his arrival at his journey's end, after writing a few letters, according to his indefatigable custom, he was immediately prostrated by an attack of asthma. He lay through the bleak days watching the smoke blown from the chimneys of the houses opposite, and vainly hoping that the wind would change its quarter from the merciless east. At the end of a week he seemed convalescent, and was allowed to see one or two friends. The apparent recovery only lasted a few hours, and was followed by a sharper attack than before. For a day or two his wife and daughter watched with painful alternations

1865.
ÆT. 60.

of hope and fear. On the 1st of April the asthma became congestive, and bronchitis supervened. It was now evident that he would not recover. He was able to make his will, and occasionally to say a few words to those who were watching by his bedside.

Mr. Bright called in the evening, but was not allowed to see him. Early the next morning (Sunday, April 2) he called again; and as all chance of a rally had now vanished, he took his place by the side of the dying man. One other friend was in the room, Mr. George Moffatt, whose intimacy with Cobden had been long and sincere. They saw that his end was very close. As the bells of St. Martin's Church were ringing for the morning service, the mists of death began to settle heavily on his brow, and his ardent, courageous, and brotherly spirit soon passed tranquilly away. Many tears were shed in homes where Cobden's name was revered and loved when the tidings that he was dead reached them.

At the time of his death he was within two months of the completion of his sixty-first year. One afternoon in the summer of 1856, he and a friend took it into their heads, as there was nothing of importance going on in the House, to stroll into the Abbey. His friend had never been inside before, as he confessed that he had never been inside St. Paul's Cathedral, though he had passed it every day of his life for fifteen years. They strolled about among the monuments for a couple of hours, and the natural remark fell from his companion that perhaps one day the name of Cobden too would figure among the heroes. "I hope not," said Cobden, "I hope not. My spirit could not rest in peace among these men of war. No, no, cathedrals are not meant to

1865. Æt. 60.

contain the remains of such men as Bright and me." He was buried by the side of his son in the little churchyard at Lavington, on the slope of the hill among the pine woods. A large concourse gathered round his grave, some of them illustrious, others of them obscure, some his companions in past victories, others his fellow-workers in causes that still seemed forlorn; but all bound together for the moment in attachment to the memory of a frank and cordial friend, and a clear-sighted and faithful citizen.

"Before we left the house," Mr. Bright has told us, "standing by me and leaning on the coffin, was his sorrowing daughter, one whose attachment to her father seems to have been a passion scarcely equalled among daughters. She said, 'My father used to like me very much to read to him the Sermon on the Mount.' His own life was to a large extent—I speak it with reverence and with hesitation —a sermon based upon that best, that greatest of all sermons. His was a life of perpetual self-sacrifice."

On the day after Cobden's death, when the House of Commons met, the Prime Minister commemorated the loss which they had all sustained in a few kindly sentences. It was reserved for Mr. Disraeli to strike a deeper note. "There is this consolation," he said, "remaining to us when we remember our unequalled and irreparable losses, that these great men are not altogether lost to us, that their words will be often quoted in this House, that their examples will often be referred to and appealed to, and that even their expressions may form a part of our discussions. There are, indeed, I may say, some Members of Parliament, who though they may not be present, are still members of this House, are independent of dissolutions, of the caprices of con-

stituencies, and even of the course of time. I think that Mr. Cobden was one of these men." 1865. ÆT. 60.

While the House was still under an impression from these words which was almost religious, Mr. Bright, yielding to a marked and silent expectation, rose and tried to say how every expression of sympathy that he had heard had been most grateful to his heart. "But the time," he went on in broken accents, "which has elapsed since in my presence the manliest and gentlest spirit that ever quitted or tenanted a human form took its flight is so short, that I dare not even attempt to give utterance to the feelings by which I am oppressed. I shall leave to some calmer moment, when I may have an opportunity of speaking before some portion of my countrymen, the lesson which I think may be learned from the life and character of my friend. I have only to say that after twenty years of most intimate and almost brotherly friendship, I little knew how much I loved him until I had lost him." As Homer says of Nestor and Ulysses, so of these two it may be said, that they never spoke diversely either in the assembly or in the council, but were always of one mind, and together advised the English with understanding and with counsel how all might be for the best.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CONCLUSION

A CHARACTER like that of Cobden calls for no elaborate attempt at analysis. In motive and purpose he was the most candid and direct of mankind. Though he was amply endowed with that practical wisdom which Aristotle describes as the first quality of the man who meddles with government, all his aims, his sympathies, his maxims were as open and transparent as the day. Nobody could be more free from the spirit of Machiavellian calculation. He had in a full measure the gift of tact, but it came from innate considerateness and good feeling, and not either from social art or from hidden subtlety of nature. Of Cobden's qualities as a public man enough has been said already.[1] Some of his private traits may well be recorded beside them.

It is easy to know how a nature so open and expansive would win the attachment of friends. In his own house, where public men do not always seek the popularity that is the very breath of their nostrils abroad, he was tender, solicitous, forbearing, never exacting. Most of his preparation for speeches and pamphlets was done amid the bustle of a young household, and he preferred to work amid the

[1] See vol. i. chapter ix.

sociable play of his little children. His thoroughly pleasant and genial temper made him treat everybody who approached him as a friend. Few men have attracted friends of such widely different type. The hard-headed man of business and the fastidious man of letters were equally touched by the interest of his conversation and the charm of his character. There must have been something remarkable about one who won the admiration of Prosper Mérimée, and the cordial friendship of Mr. Goldwin Smith, and the devoted service of strenuous practical men like Mr. Slagg and Mr. Thomasson. His exceeding amiability was not insipid. He was never bitter, but he knew how to hit hard, and if a friend did wrong and public mischief came of it, Cobden did not shrink from the duty of dealing faithfully with him. We have seen with what vigour he denounced the doings of Sir John Bowring in China, and the supposed backslidings of Sir William Molesworth in the Cabinet.[1]

He usually extended his good nature even to the busybodies who pester public men with profitless correspondence. When strangers who wrote to him committed the absurd offence of subscribing to their letters a hieroglyphic that no one could read, he only said to them in reply that it was a pity that some system of rewards and punishments could not be devised to make people at least sign their own names plainly. It was very seldom that he allowed himself to be provoked into dealing a blow to the impertinence which used to protest against his un-English conduct,

[1] See above, p. 135. A sharper dispute took place between Cobden and Sir William Molesworth on the 3rd of August 1855. The latter had gone out of his way to use some hard words about the Peace party. Cobden showed, with a good deal of pungency, that until he went into the Cabinet Sir William Molesworth avowedly shared his opinions to the letter.—*Hansard*, cxxxix.

his want of patriotism, and the other cries of that stupid party which is not by any means exclusively composed of Tories. Old soldiers in the army of the League especially were apt to suppose that this accident gave them a right to lecture him. One of them, an entire stranger to Cobden, wrote a vehement protest against his un-English conduct in siding with the North in the American War, and justified his remonstrance by the fact that he had once belonged to the Anti-Corn-Law League. "Permit me to say," said Cobden, "that you must have been out of place in our ranks, for no one can be a consistent enemy of monopoly, who does not tolerate an honest difference of opinion on every question. Your note is a laughable assumption of superiority and authority, where I can recognize neither."[1]

It was his fortune to be engaged in incessant conflict all through his life, and we have had occasion to mark the dauntless buoyancy with which he sprung time after time down to the very end into the breach, and waged his active battle almost single-handed against Lord Palmerston and his immovable host. What makes it the more admirable is that Cobden was not by nature inclined to this ceaseless attitude of oppugnancy. There is a story that, going down to the House on one of these occasions, he said to his companion, "I hate having to beard in this way hundreds of well-meaning wrong-headed people, and to face the look of rage with which they regard me. I had a thousand times rather not have to do it, but it must be done." Even in his sharpest speeches we are conscious of a sentiment of this kind. He was unsparing in the trenchancy of his argument, but he never sought to hurt individuals, not even Lord Palmerston. "I believe he is perfectly sincere,"

[1] November 12, 1864.

Cobden said, "for the longer I live, the more I believe in men's sincerity." There could be no better sign of a pure and generous character, than that so honourable a conviction as this should have been the lesson of his experience.

Cobden's conversation, like his public addresses, was simple, reasonable, devoid of striking figures of speech, but bright, eager, and expansive; and, as Mérimée said,[1] it was the outcome of an extremely interesting mind, and unlike English conversation in being quite free from commonplaces. On religious questions he was for the most part silent. When he was in the country, he went to church like other people. All his personal habits were in the highest degree simple and frugal. He was indifferent to the pleasures of the table, he did not care to acquire fine things of any kind, and he had none of the passion of the collector. Politics were the one commanding interest of his life.

But it is well once more to note that what Cobden talked about and cared for was real politics, not the game of party. Politics in his sense meant the large workings of policy, not the manœuvres of Members of Parliament. When the newspaper was unfolded in the morning, that furnished him and his friends or his guests with topics for the day. Events all over the world were deliberately discussed in relation to wide and definite general principles; their bearings were worked out in the light of what Cobden conceived to be the great economical and social movements of the world. This is what makes a real school in politics. It was in the same spirit that Cobden read books and talked with bookish men. His point of view was always actual, not in the sense of the vulgar practical man, but social and political.

[1] See vol. i. p. 214.

When he read a book, he read it as all reading should be done, with a view to life and practice, and not in the way of refined self-indulgence. The *Life of Eliot* made him think of the state of the franchise in those old times, and Motley's *History of the Netherlands*, which interested him greatly, suggested to him that Queen Elizabeth carried her aversion to European crusading in the Palmerstonian sense almost too far.[1] To the Ilyssus we may confess that Cobden was a little unjust, but the point of his good-

[1] "Why, when I read Motley's *History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic*—an admirable book, which everybody should read—when I read the history of the Netherlands, and when I see how that struggling community, with their whole country desolated by Spanish troops, and every town lighted up daily with the fires of persecution,—when I see the accounts of what passed when the envoys came to Queen Elizabeth and asked for aid, how she is huckstering for money while they are begging for help to their religion, I declare that, with all my principles of non-intervention, I am almost ashamed of old Queen Bess. And then there were Burleigh, Walsingham, and the rest, who were, if possible, harder and more difficult to deal with than their mistress. Why, they carried out in its unvarnished selfishness a national British policy; they had no other idea of a policy but a national British policy, and they carried it out with a degree of selfishness amounting to downright avarice.

"He next quotes Chatham. Do you suppose that Chatham was running about the world protecting and looking after other people's affairs? Why, he went abroad in the spirit of a commercial traveller more than any Minister we ever had. . . . At that time, Lord Chatham thought, that by making war upon France and seizing the Canadas, he was bringing custom to the English merchants and manufacturers; and he publicly declared that he made those conquests for the very purpose of giving a monopoly of those conquered markets to Englishmen at home; and he said he would not allow the colonists to manufacture a horseshoe for themselves. . . . Now, if I take Chatham's great son; if I take the second Pitt, when he entered upon wars he immediately began the conquest of colonies. When he entered upon war with France in 1793, and for three or four years afterwards, our navy was employed in little else than seizing colonies, the islands of the West Indies, etc., whether they belonged to France, Holland, or Denmark, or other nations, and he believed by that means he could make war profitable.—*Speeches*, ii. 350, 351.

humoured sarcasm has been much misrepresented. He was, he said in his last speech, a great advocate of culture of every kind. What he sought was that young men should be led to add to classical learning a great knowledge of modern affairs and the habits of serious political thought about their own time.[1]

His own industry in acquiring the knowledge that was necessary for his purpose was enormous. His pamphlets show his appetite for Blue books, and as with other sensible men it was an appetite which led him not merely to swallow but to digest and assimilate. He was a constant student of *Hansard*, and for one who seeks for purposes of action or controversy to make himself well versed in the political transactions of the present century, there is no book so well worth the labour of ransacking. Cobden was never afraid of labour that he thought would be useful; he cheerfully undertook even the drudgery of translation, and that too in a case where he did not in his heart expect to make any important mark on opinion.[2]

[1] The passage was prompted by a little slip in a leading article in the *Times*, which had made one of the greatest of American rivers run uphill a great number of miles into another river, and then these two united (the waters of which are never blended at all) were made to flow into a third river, into which, as it happens, neither of them pours a drop. How preposterous, said Cobden, that young gentlemen who know all about the geography of ancient Greece, should be unable, if asked to point out Chicago on the map, to go within a thousand miles of it. "When I was at Athens," he said, "I sallied out one summer morning to see the far-famed river, the Ilyssus, and after walking for some hundred yards up what appeared to be the bed of a winter torrent, I came up to a number of Athenian laundresses, and I found they had dammed up this far-famed classic river, and that they were using every drop of water for their linen and such sanitary purposes. I say, why should not the young gentlemen who are taught all about the geography of the Ilyssus know something about the geography of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Missouri?"—*Speeches*, ii. 364.

[2] In 1858 he translated M. Chevalier's pamphlet on Gold.

People have often wondered how it was that a man who showed so remarkable a capacity for understanding public business, should have made so little of a success of his own affairs. The same question might be asked of Burke and of Pitt, both of them economists and financiers of the first order, yet both of whom allowed their private affairs to fall into embarrassment and ruin. One obvious answer is that their minds were too much absorbed in public interests to have any room left for that close attention to private interests which must always be required to raise a poor man into prosperity. Cobden, it is true, deliberately attempted material success, and did not attempt it with prudence. The failure was in fact due to the very qualities which made him successful in larger affairs. His penetration shows to a man of this kind ways in which money may be made, and his energy naturally incites him to try to make it. Cobden was penetrating, energetic, and sanguine. "The records of unfortunate commerce," as Mr. Bagehot said, "abound in instances of men who have been unsuccessful, because they had great mind, great energy, and great hope, but had not money in proportion."[1]

One obvious criticism on Cobden's work, and it has often been made, is that he was expecting the arrival of a great social reform from the mere increase and more equal distribution of material wealth. He ought to have known, they say, that what our society needs is the diffusion of intellectual light and the fire of a higher morality. It is even said by some that Free Trade has done harm rather than good, because it has flooded the country with

[1] Bagehot's *Literary Studies*, vol. i. p. 373—a passage as applicable to Cobden as to Mr. Wilson, about whom it is written.

wealth which men have never been properly taught how to use. In other words, material progress has been out of all proportion to moral progress.

Now nobody had better reason to know this than Cobden. The perpetual chagrin of his life was the obstinate refusal of those on whom he had helped to shower wealth and plenty to hear what he had to say on the social ideals to which their wealth should lead. At last he was obliged to say to himself, as he wrote to a friend: "Nations have not yet learnt to bear prosperity, liberty, and peace. They will learn it in a higher state of civilization. We think we are the models for posterity, when we are little better than beacons to help it to avoid the rocks and quicksands."

"When I come here," he wrote to Mr. Hargreaves from Dunford, "to ramble alone in the fields and to think, I am impressed with the aspect of our political and social relations. We have the spirit of feudalism rife and rampant in the midst of the antagonistic development of the age of Watt, Arkwright, and Stephenson! Nay, feudalism is every day more and more in the ascendant in political and social life. So great is its power and prestige that it draws to it the support and homage of even those who are the natural leaders of the newer and better civilization. Manufacturers and merchants as a rule seem only to desire riches that they may be enabled to prostrate themselves at the feet of feudalism. How is this to end? And whither are we tending in both our domestic and foreign relations? Can we hope to avoid collisions at home or wars abroad whilst all the tendencies are to throw power and influence into the wrong scale?"[1]

[1] *To Mr. Hargreaves*, April 10, 1863.

He had begun life with the idea that the great manufacturers and merchants of England should aspire to that high directing position which had raised the Medici, the Fuggers, and the De Witts to a level with the sovereign princes of the earth.[1] At the end he still thought that no other class possessed wealth and influence enough to counteract the feudal class.[2] Through all his public course Cobden did his best to moralize this great class; to raise its self-respect and its consciousness of its own dignity and power. Like every one else, he could only work within his own limits. It is too soon yet to say how our feudal society will ultimately be recast. So far, plutocracy shows a very slight gain upon aristocracy, of which it remains, as Cobden so constantly deplored, an imitation, and a very bad imitation. The political exclusiveness of the oligarchy has been thoroughly broken down since Cobden's day. It seems, however, as if the preponderance of power were inevitably destined not for the middle class, as he believed, but for the workmen.

For this future *régime* Cobden's work was the best preparation. He conceived a certain measure of material prosperity, generally diffused, to be an indispensable instrument of social well-being. For England, as with admirable foresight he laid down in his first pamphlet in 1835, the cardinal fact is the existence of the United States—its industrial competition and its democratic example. This has transformed the conditions of policy. This is what warns English statesmen to set their house in order. For a country in our position, to keep the standard of living at its right level, free access to the means of subsistence and the material of industry was the

[1] See vol. i. p. 146. [2] See above, p. 393.

first essential. Thrift in government and wise administration of private capital have become equally momentous in presence of the rising world around us. To abstain from intervention in the affairs of other nations is not only recommended by economic prudence, but is the only condition on which proper attention can be paid to the moral and social necessities at home. Let us not, then, tax Cobden with failing to do the work of the social moralist. It is his policy which gives to the social reformer a foothold. He accepted the task which, from the special requirements of the time, it fell to him to do, and it is both unjust and ungrateful to call him narrow for not performing the tasks of others as well as his own.

It was his view of policy as a whole, connected with the movement of wealth and industry all over the world, that distinguished Cobden and his allies from the Philosophic Radicals, who had been expected to form so great and powerful a school in the reformed Parliament.[1] Hume had anticipated him in attacking expenditure, and Mr. Roebuck in preaching self-government in the colonies. It was not until Retrenchment and Colonial Policy were placed in their true relation to the new and vast expansion of commerce and the growth of population, that any considerable number of people accepted them. The Radical party only became effective when it had connected its principles with economic facts. The different points of view of the Manchester School and of the Philosophic Radicals was illustrated in Mr. Mill's opposition to the alterations which Cobden had advocated in international maritime law. Mr. Mill argued that the best way of stopping wars is to make them as onerous as

[1] See Mr. Mill's *Autobiography*, pp. 194-196.

possible to the citizens of the country concerned, and therefore that to protect the goods of the merchants of a belligerent country is to give them one motive the less for hindering their Government from making war. With all reverence for the ever admirable author of this argument, it must be pronounced to be abstract and unreal, when compared with Cobden's. You are not likely to prevent the practice of war, he contended, but what you can do is to make it less destructive to the interests and the security of great populations. An argument of this kind rests on a more solid basis, and suggests a wider comprehension of actual facts. In the same way he translated the revolutionary watchword of the Fraternity of Peoples into the language of common sense and practice, and the international sentiment as interpreted by him became an instrument for preserving as well as improving European order. He was justified in regarding his principles as the true Conservatism of modern societies.

Great economic and social forces flow with a tidal sweep over communities that are only half-conscious of that which is befalling them. Wise statesmen are those who foresee what time is thus bringing, and endeavour to shape institutions and to mould men's thought and purpose in accordance with the change that is silently surrounding them. To this type Cobden by his character and his influence belonged. Hence, amid the coarse strife and blind passion of the casual factions of the day, his name will stand conspicuously out as a good servant of the Commonwealth, and be long held in grateful memory.

APPENDIX

FULL TEXT OF THE LAST LETTER WRITTEN BY MR. COBDEN

23 Suffolk Street, Pall Mall,
London, 22*nd March* 1865.

My dear Potter,

I return Mill's letter.—Everything from him is entitled to respectful consideration—but I confess, after the best attention to the proposed representation of minorities which I can give it, I am so stupid as to fail to see its merits. He speaks of 50,000 electors having to elect five members, and that 30,000 may elect them all, and to obviate this he would give the 20,000 minority two votes, but I would give only one vote to each elector, and one representative to each constituency. Instead of the 50,000 returning five in a lump, I would have five constituencies of 10,000, each returning one member. Thus, if the Metropolis, for example, were entitled with a fair distribution of electoral power, to forty votes, I would divide it into forty districts or wards, each to return one member, and in this way every class and every variety of opinion would have a chance of a fair representation—Belgravia, Marylebone, St. James's, St. Giles's, Whitechapel, Spitalfields, etc., would each and all have their members. I don't know any better plan for giving all opinions a chance of being heard, and,

after all, it is opinions that are to be represented. If the minority have a faith that their opinions, and not those of the majority, are the true ones, then let them agitate and discuss until their principles are in the ascendant. This is the motive for political action and the healthy agitation of public life. I do not like to recognize the necessity of dealing with working men as a class in an extension of the franchise. The small shopkeeper and the artisan of the towns are socially on a level. The subject is, however, too large for a sheet of notepaper.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

(Sgd.) R. COBDEN.

THOS. B. POTTER, Esq.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD COBDEN, BASED ON THE BRITISH MUSEUM CATALOGUE.

The Political Writings of Richard Cobden. 2 vols. London, 1867. 8vo. 8008. ee.

Second edition. 2 vols. London [printed], New York, 1868 [1867]. 8vo. 8008. ee. 3.

[Another edition.] With an introductory essay by Sir L. Mallet, etc. (Notes by F. W. Chesson.) London, 1878. 8vo. 2238. a. 14.

[Another edition.] Pp. vii.-704. Cassell and Co., London, 1886. 8vo. 8139. aaa. 22.

Speeches on Questions of Public Policy. Edited by John Bright and J. E. Thorold Rogers. 2 vols. London, Oxford [printed], 1870. 8vo. 2238. f. 2.

England, Ireland, and America. By a Manchester Manufacturer [Richard Cobden]. 1835. 8vo. T. 1918. (4.)

1836. 8vo. 8135. i.

Russia. By a Manchester Manufacturer [Richard Cobden]. 1836. 8vo. 8093. f.

Facts for the Present Crisis. Richard Cobden on Russia. Reprinted from the original pamphlet published in 1836 under the name of "A Manchester Manufacturer." Third edition. Manchester, 1876. 8vo. 8094. g. 6. (9.)

Corn Laws. Extracts from the Works of Thomas Perronet Thompson, selected and classified by Richard Cobden. Manchester [1841 ?]. 8vo. 8245. c. 79. (4.)

The Corn Laws. Speech of Richard Cobden in the House of Commons on February 24, 1842. Sixteenth Thousand. Revised. Manchester [1842]. 12mo. 8244. a. 10.

The Land-Tax Fraud. Speech of Richard Cobden in the House of Commons, March 14, 1842. Manchester [1842]. 12mo. 8223. a. 12.

Tenant Farmers and Farm Labourers. Speech on the 12th March 1844, on moving for a Select Committee "to inquire into the effects of protective duties on imports upon the interests of tenant farmers and farm labourers." Pp. 23. J. Gadsby, Manchester [1844?]. 8vo. 8135. dd. 9. (11.)

Corrected report of the speech of Richard Cobden in the House of Commons, 12th of March 1844, on his motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the effects of protective duties on imports upon the interests of the tenant farmers and farm labourers in this country. Second edition. 1844. 8vo. 1391. f. 43.

On the effects of Protection on the agricultural interests of the country. House of Commons, March 13, 1845. Adams (C. K.), Representative British Orations, etc. Vol. iii. 1884. 16mo. 12301. cc. 3.

Speech of Richard Cobden in the House of Commons, February 18, 1848. Pp. 8. A. Heywood, Manchester [1848]. 12mo. 8135. a. 5. (2.)

National Defences. Speech of Richard Cobden. London, 1848. 8vo. 1398. f.

Speech on the Russian Loan, delivered at the London Tavern, January 18th. London, 1850. 8vo. 8223. a. 13.

England. National Parliamentary and National Reform Association. National Reform Tracts Nos. 21, 22, 23, 24. Proceedings at the fourth monthly soiree of National Reform Association, with the speeches of Sir J. Walmsley and Richard Cobden. London [1851]. 8vo. 8138. df. 5. (1.)

1793 and 1853, in three letters. Second edition. London, 1853. 8vo. 8138. c.

New edition revised, with a preface. London, Farringdon [printed], 1853. 8vo. 8138. c.

Fourth edition. London, 1853. 8vo. 8026. ee. 8. (3.)

Report of the Proceedings of the Peace Conference at Edinburgh, October 1853. With the speeches of Richard Cobden. Reports of the Peace Congresses at Brussels, etc. 1861. 8vo. 8425. c. 52.

How Wars are got up in India. The origin of the Burmese War. Fourth edition. London, 1853. 8vo. 8022. c. 15.

Address to the Mechanics' Institution at Barnsley, on the re-opening of the New Lecture Hall. See British Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century. Literary Addresses. Second series. 1855 [1854]. 8vo. 1205. b. 12.

What Next—and Next? London, 1856. 8vo. 8028. b.
Fifth edition. Pp. 50. J. Ridgway, London, 1856. 8vo. 8026. d. 12. (4.)
On the probable fall of the value of gold. By Michel Chevalier. Translated from the French, with preface, by Richard Cobden. Manchester, 1859. 8vo. 8223. b. 53.
The Three Panics. Third edition. Pp. 152. Ward and Co., London, 1862. 8vo. 8026. c. 23.
Fifth edition. London, 1862. 8vo. 8138. e.
[Another edition.] Pp. 168. Cassell and Company, London, [1884]. 8vo. 8138. aa. 7.
Les Trois Paniques, épisodes de l'histoire contemporaine, traduit de l'anglais par A. Raymond. Paris, 1862. 8vo. 8138. h.
Maritime Law and Belligerent Rights. Speech of Richard Cobden advocating a reform of International Maritime Law, delivered to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Oct. 25, 1862. Revised and corrected by the author. Manchester [printed], London [1864]. 8vo. 6955. bb.
Speech of Mr. Cobden, on the "Foreign Enlistment Act," in the House of Commons, April 24, 1863. London, 1863. 8vo. 8138. cc.
Second edition. London, 1863. 8vo. 8138. b.
Third edition. London, 1863. 8vo. 8138. b.
Mr. Cobden and the *Times* Correspondence between Mr. Cobden, . . . and Mr. Delane, editor of the *Times*; with a supplementary correspondence between Mr. Cobden and [Thornton Hunt, writing on behalf of] the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*. Manchester, 1864. 8vo. 8138. cc.
Mr. Cobden on the Land Question. London, 1873. 8vo. C. T. 355. (7.)
[Written by Mr. Cobden, Jan. 22, 1864, and published in the *Morning Star* under the signature of R. S. T.]
Government Manufacturing Establishments. Speech of Richard Cobden in the House of Commons, July 22, 1864, etc. London, 1869. 8vo. 8246. ee. 4.
Solution. Une solution prompte! Congrès ou Guerre: précédé d'une lettre de Richard Cobden. Paris, 1868. 8vo. 8026. g.

APPENDIX

Biography, Criticism, Etc.

Apjohn, L. Richard Cobden and the Free Traders. [By L. Apjohn.] [1881.] "Memorable Men of the Nineteenth Century." Vol. iv. [1881, etc.] 8vo. 10601. bbb.

Ashworth, H. Recollections of Richard Cobden . . . and the Anti-Corn-Law League. London, Manchester [printed], 1877. 8vo. 8138. aa. 5.

[Second edition.] London [1878]. 8vo. 8138. de. 1.

Bastiat, Frédéric. Cobden et le Ligue, ou l'agitation anglaise pour la liberté du commerce, etc. Paris, Senlis [printed], 1845. 8vo. 1391. g. 14.

Blackman, E. L. Our Relations with America. A reply to the arguments of Mr. Cobden . . . as to the supply of ammunition of war to the belligerents. Manchester [1863]. 8vo. 8175. e. 1. (1.)

Brett, J. *Calculator.* Free Trade. Cobden, Bright, Gladstone, . . . Fawcett, collated and examined. Pp. 63. Effingham Wilson, London, 1886. 8vo. 8229. i. 18. (4.)

Brewster, D. The Radical Party: its Principles, Objects, and Leaders—Cobden, etc. Manchester, 1867. 8vo. 8138. cc. 10. (10.)

Bright, Right Hon. J. Speeches delivered in Bradford on the occasion of the inauguration of the Cobden Memorial, . . . with a sketch of the history of Cobden, the Anti-Corn-Law League. Revised by Mr. Bright. London, Bradford [printed, 1877]. 8vo. 8138. df. 5. (11.)

Bullock, Thomas Austin. Richard Cobden. (A study for young men.) London [1866]. 8vo. 10817. cc. 21. (8.)

Cashin, T. F. Free Trade Fallacies; or Cobden confuted. An exposition on the existing phase of progress and poverty, etc. Pp. xvi.-69. Wyman and Sons, London, 1886. 8vo. 8229. bbb. 53. (12.)

Chevalier, Michel. Free Trade in Gold, being a reply to the Cobden-Chevalier treatise, "On the probable decline in the value of gold," also an exposition of the French schemes on the currency now maturing." London, 1861. 12mo. 8223. a. 49.

Cobden, Richard. Analysis of Mr. Cobden's "Cure for the Russo-Phobia" [in his pamphlet entitled "Russia." By

a Manchester Manufacturer.] Pp. 33. [J. Ridgway and Sons, London, 1836.] 8vo. 8028. e. 36. (1.)

A Letter from a Crow to Mr. Cobden. Translated from the original by a Northamptonshire Squire. London, 1844. 4to. 1391. g. 31.

Banquet offert à Richard Cobden par la Société des Économistes le 18 août 1846. Extrait du No. 57 du Journal des Économistes. Paris, 1846. 8vo. 1391. k. 37.

Bordeaux. Association pour la liberté des échanges. Publications de l'Association. Banquet offert à Richard Cobden le 1er septembre 1846. Discours de Richard Cobden. (Bordeaux) [1846]. 8vo. 8245. cc. 23. (3.)

Discorsi pronunziati al Banchetto dato in Livorno a Richard Cobden, il 12 Maggio 1847. Livorno, 1847. 8vo. 8245. f. 6.

Letter to Richard Cobden on the Scotch Law of Entail. By a Scotch Landlord. Inverness, 1847. 8vo. 6583. b.

A letter to Richard Cobden in reply to "1793 and 1853." By a Manchester Man. Manchester, 1853. 8vo. 8138. f.

"The Three Panics" dispelled. A reply to the historical episode of Richard Cobden. Reprinted . . . from Colburn's *United Service Magazine*. London, 1862. 8vo. 8138. b.

[Reception at the Accademia Pontaniana.] Academies. Naples.—Società Pontaniana, etc., afterwards Accademia Pontaniana. Tornato ordinaria del 21 Marzo 1847. [For the reception of Richard Cobden as a member of Academy.] [Naples, 1847.] 8vo. 8207. h. 1. (6.)

Roi des Belges. [Being a reply to Richard Cobden's letter to *L'Économiste Belge* on the fortifications of Antwerp.] Par un Ex-Colonel de la Garde Civique. Dédié aux blessés de septembre. Deuxième édition. London, 1863. 8vo.

Cobden-Delane Controversy. Opinions of the Liberal Press on the Correspondence between Mr. Cobden . . . and Mr. Delane, etc. Manchester, 1864. 8vo. 8138. cc.

In Memoriam. Richard Cobden, his Life and Times. London [1865]. 8vo. 10817. cc.

Cobden's Nederidge Navolgers in Indië: een beschamend woord voor alle bestrijders der liberale Koloniale politiek. (Overgedrukt uit het "Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage" van 8-11 Augustus 1865.) 's Gravenhage, 1865. 8vo. 8022. dd.

Richard Cobden : sein Leben und sein Wirken. Von einem Freihändler und Friedensfreunde. Bremen, Norden [printed], 1869. 8vo. 10817. bbb.

Richard Cobden, the Friend of the People. The story of his life told for popular reading. London [1877 ?]. 8vo. 10803. b. 1. (11.)

COOKE, FRANCES E. An English Hero ; the story of Richard Cobden, written for young people. Pp. 130. Sonnenschein and Co., London, 1886. 8vo. 10601. b. 35.

DAY, G. G. Cobden's Contradictions. Extracted from Mr. G. G. Day's Letter to the *Morning Herald* of March 27, 1850. [London, 1850.] S. sh. fol. 806. k. 15. (27.)

DENMAN, Hon. J. The pressing necessity for increased docks and basins at Portsmouth, with some observations on Mr. Cobden's "Three Panics," etc. 1862. 8vo. 8806. c.

1863. 8vo. 8806. c.

DINO CARINA, ——. Riccardo Cobden. (Elogio.) Firenze, 1865. 12mo. 10817. aa. 15.

DUNCKLEY, H. Richard Cobden and the Jubilee of Free Trade, etc. By H. Dunckley, P. Leroy-Beaulieu, T. Barth, L. Courtney, C. P. Villiers. With preface by R. Gowing. Pp. 246. T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1896. 8vo. 08225. f. 1.

DYER, GEORGE H. Richard Cobden. Pp. 16. Dyer Bros., London [1882]. 16mo. One of the "Penny Popular Biographies." 10803. aa. 6. (3.)

Six Men of the People, etc. Richard Cobden . . . By G. H. Dyer. Dyer Bros., London [1882]. 8vo. 10803. aa. 6. (2.)

E., F. M. Richard Cobden at Home. By F. M. E[dge ?]. London, Manchester [printed] [1868]. 8vo. 10817. aaa. 41. (3.)

ELLIS, W. A Few Questions on Secular Education—What it is, and what it ought to be ; with an attempt to answer them. Preceded by an Appeal to Richard Cobden, Esq., and the members of the late Anti-Corn-Law League. By the Author of "The Outlines of Social Economy" [W. Ellis]. London, 1848. 8vo. 8305. e. 82.

GARNIER, C. J. Richard Cobden, les ligueurs, et la Ligue ; précis de l'histoire de la dernière révolution économique et financière en Angleterre. Paris, 1846. 12mo. 1391. a. 32.

GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E. Alarming results of the non-

reciprocity system of Free Trade promoted by Messrs. Gladstone, Cobden, Bright, and their supporters. Fourth edition. London [1865]. S. sh. fol. 1880. d. 1. (67.)

GOWING, RICHARD. Richard Cobden. Pp. 128. 1885. "World's Workers," 1885, etc. 8vo. 10601. bbb.

GRANDGUILLOT, A. Pamphlets Nationaux. No. 1. Les Joujoux de M. Cobden. Par A. Grandguillot. Paris [1868, etc.]. 8vo. 8245. ff. 3.

HALL, A. HALL. The Land and the Agricultural Population. [Being letters of A. H. Hall, W. T. White, and others, in reply to two speeches delivered at Rochdale in November 1863, by Richard Cobden and John Bright. Reprinted from the *West Sussex Gazette*.] Arundel, 1864. 8vo. 7075. bb. 27.

HOBART, VERE HENRY. The Mission of Richard Cobden. . . . Reprinted from *Macmillan's Magazine*. London [1867]. 8vo. 8139. aa.

HOLDFAST, HARRY, *pseud.* A short letter to Mr. Cobden in reply to his long speech at Manchester from his quondam admirer, Harry Holdfast. London, 1849. 8vo. 8138. d.

HOLTZENDORFF, F. von. Richard Cobden . . . von F. von Holtzendorff. Virchow (R.) and Holtzendorff-Vietmansdorf (F. v.), Sammlung gemeinverständlicher wissenschaftlicher Vorträge, herausgegeben von R. v. und F. v. Holtzendorff. Berlin, 1866, etc. 8vo. Series I. Heft 17.

KRETZSCHMAR, AUGUSTE. Richard Cobden, der Apostel der Handelsfreiheit und die jüngste staatsökonomische Revolution in Grossbritannien. Nach der besten englischen und französischen Quellen. Grimma, 1846. 12mo. 8245. a. 69. (2).

LAMMER MOOR. Bowring, Cobden, and China, etc. A Memoir by Lammer Moor. Pp. 32. J. Menzies, Edinburgh, 1857. 8vo. 8022. d.

LEVI, L. On Richard Cobden. An introductory lecture, delivered in King's College, London, etc. London, 1865. 8vo. 8205. bb. 10.

LINDSAY, W. S. Remarks on the Law of Partnership and Limited Liability. By W. S. Lindsay and Richard Cobden. London, 1856. 8vo. 6376. b. 15.

London. iii. Financial Reform Union. Papers on Taxation, etc. No. 3. A Budget for 1869, based upon Mr. Cobden's "National Budget," proposed in 1849. Pp. 7. [London], 1868. 8vo. C. T. 274 (8).

MacGilchrist, John, of London. Richard Cobden, the apostle of Free Trade, his political career and public services. A biography. [Illustrated with photographs.] Pp. 294. Lockwood and Co., London, 1865. 8vo. 10817. aa. 25.

Maître, C. Richard Cobden, ou l'Esprit anglais contre l'Esprit français à propos de la Liberté des Échanges. Paris, 1846. 16mo. 1391. a. 35. (2.)

Mallet, Sir L. The Political Opinions of Richard Cobden. Pp. viii.-64. Macmillan and Co., London, 1869. 8vo. 8008. aaa.

Marsham, J. C. How Wars arise in India. Observations on Mr. Cobden's Pamphlet entitled "The Origin of the Burmese War." 1853. 8vo. 8022. d.

Maydwell, Isaac. Maydwell's Analysis of Cobden's Addresses, with remarks on Mr. Greg's speech at the Great League Meeting at Manchester. London, 1843. 8vo. 1391. g. 47.

Morley, John, Right Hon. The Life of Richard Cobden. 2 vols. Chapman and Hall, London, 1881. 8vo. 2406. f. 6.

Abridged edition. 1902. 8vo. 10816. h. 7.

Ouvry, Henry Aimé. Stein and his reforms in Prussia, with reference to the land question in England, and an appendix containing the views of Richard Cobden, and J. S. Mill's advice to Land Reformers. London, 1873. 8vo. 8277. b. 66.

Pope, J. B. The Curse of Cobden, or John Bull *v.* John Bright. [A pamphlet upon Free Trade.] W. Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1885. 8vo. 8228. b. 37.

Protin, P. O. Les Économistes Appréciés, ou Nécessité de la Protection . . . Cobden, Michel Chevalier—Carey—Du Mesnil—Marigny, etc. 2 pt. Paris, 1862-63. 12mo. 8206. aaa. 31.

Reybaud, M. K. L. Économistes modernes . . . Richard Cobden, M. F. Bastiat, M. M. Chevalier, M. J. S. Mill, M. L. Faucher, M. P. Rossi, etc. Paris, 1862. 8vo. 8206. f. 17.

Richards, A. B. Cobden and his pamphlet [1793 and 1853] considered, in a letter to Richard Cobden, etc. 1853. 8vo. 8138. df.

Ritchie, J. E. The Life of Richard Cobden [by J. E. Ritchie]: with a faithful likeness from a photograph by Eastham, etc. London [1865]. Fol. 10816. i.

ROBKIN. "Robkin and Blight" [*i.e.* Richard Cobden and John Bright]. What unfair trade is doing for us. [Signed "Pastor Agricola."] Pp. 23. H. T. Cooke and Son, Warwick, 1885. 8vo. 8139. b. 29. (7.)

ROGERS, JAMES EDWIN THOROLD. Cobden and Modern Political Opinion. Essays on certain political topics. London, 1873. 8vo. 2238. e. 12.

Russia—Appendix, History and Politics. Russia. In answer to a Manchester Manufacturer [Richard Cobden]. London, 1837. 8vo. 8026. g. 33. (1.)

SALIS SCHWABE, J., MADAME. Richard Cobden, Notes sur ses voyages, correspondances et souvenirs, recueillés par Mme. Salis Schwabe, avec une préface de M. G. Molinari. Pp. xvi.-384. Paris, 1879. 8vo. 10920. ee. 14.

Reminiscences of Richard Cobden, compiled by Mrs. Salis Schwabe. With a Preface by Lord Farrer. Pp. xvi.-340. T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1895. 8vo. 10815. e. 18.

SCOTT, A. T. In Memoriam. The Life and Labours of Richard Cobden . . . to which is appended an account of the Funeral. London, 1865. 8vo. 10825. bb. 33. (6.)

SIBREE, JAMES. Richard Cobden: Philanthropist and Statesman. Hull, London [1865]. 16mo. 10817. a. 49.

SIMONSON, F. Richard Cobden und die Antikornzöllige, sowie ihre Bedeutung für die wirthschaftlichen Verhältnisse des deutschen Reiches. Pp. 64. Berlin, 1863. 8vo. 8229. de. 32. (11.)

URQUHART, D. Answer to Mr. Cobden on the assimilation of war and peace [as proposed by Mr. Cobden in a letter to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce]. Also analysis of the correspondence [of the English Government] with the United States [May, June, 1861], showing the Declaration of Paris to have been violated by England and France. Pp. 64. Hardwick, London, 1862. 8vo. 1250. c. 38. (7.)

WALCKER, CARL. Richard Cobdens volkswirthschaftliche und politische Aussichten, auf Grund älteren und neuerer Quellen systematisch dargestellt. Pp. vi.-91. Hamburg, Leipzig [printed], 1885. 8vo. 8229. d. 35. (7.)

Warminster Fair Trade and Home Labour Defence League. The Curse of Cobden; what it means. An address to those with brains. Issued by the Warminster Fair Trade and Home Labour Defence League. [Signed for the League by John W. Hull.] Pp. 8. Warminster [1901]. 8vo. 08226. g. 62. (13.)

WATKIN, Sir E. W., Bart. Alderman Cobden, of Manchester. Letters and reminiscences of Richard Cobden, with portraits, illustrations, etc. L.P., pp. 218. Ward and Locke, London [1891]. 4to. 10816. g. 10.

WOODS, J. CRAWFORD. In Memory of Richard Cobden, a sermon [on Isaiah x. 18, and Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 40] preached . . . July 9, 1865. Adelaide, 1865. 8vo. 10816. bbb. 15. (3.)

INDEX

Aberdeen, Cobden at, i. 308
Aberdeen, Lord, leaves the Foreign Office, 1847, i. 502; administration formed, ii. 99; Cobden sees, 150; politics of, 352
Aborigines Society, ii. 23
Agitation, statistics of, i. 312-13
Albert, Prince, ii. 125
Alexandria, Cobden describes his landing at, 1836, i. 53-55; the Arabs, curiosities at, 56
Algiers, Cobden in, 1860, ii. 318, 358
Alison, ii. 106
Allen, William, of Plough Court, i. 149
Alliance, unholy, between Tories and the Residuum, i. 134
Althorpe, Lord, Budget of, 1831, i. 183
Alva, decree of, i. 265
Amber, Millicent, mother of Cobden, i. 3
America, Cobden visits, 1835, i. 33; Cobden makes second voyage to, to examine Illinois Central line, ii. 205; the civil war in, 1861, 366
American competition, importance of, i. 117; colonies, ii. 107; railways, Cobden's investments in, 202-3; blockade, 398; war, 402, 407, 411, 414, 451
Americans, the self-esteem of, i. 36
Ancestors of Cobden, i. 2
Antonelli, i. 459
Antwerp, ii. 287
Arabs, ii. 26
Arbitration, recognition of policy of, ii. 155
Archæological Society of Sussex, ii. 468
Arkwright, ii. 489
Arlès-Dufour, ii. 284, 360
Arnaud, St., ii. 286
Arrow boarded by Chinese, ii. 166; affair, the, 166-7
Ascendancy, i. 350
Asher, Dr., i. 480
Ashley, Lord, i. 322; motion of, that hours of labour shall be ten hours, 322, 400
Ashworth, Henry, i. 271; ii. 211
Association, Anti-Corn-Law, subscription raised by, Jan. 1839, i. 158; completely organized, Jan. 1839, 159
Atfeh, Cobden at, i. 58
Athenæum Club, Cobden elected member of, 1857, ii. 184
Athens and the Greeks, i. 88
Athens, Cobden goes to, March 19, 1837, i. 87
Austria, ii. 34, 36, 39, 107; and Italy, 259, 262
Austrian loan of £7,000,000, speech on, Oct. 1849, ii. 35
Austrian Treaty, Cobden's diary on, ii. 258
Autumn of 1845, the turning-point in Peel's career, i. 362
Aylesbury, Cobden at, i. 295; Cobden's speech at, 498
Azeglio, Marquis d', i. 461

Bahia, ii. 465
Baines, Mr., ii. 120
Balance of power, i. 112-13; ii. 455
Ballot required, ii. 120
Bandini, i. 448
Bangor, Cobden at, ii. 162
Barberini Palace, i. 462
Barcelona, Cobden at, i. 451
Baroche, M., ii. 251; signs the French Treaty, 251
Barrot, Odillon, as an agitator, 1846, i. 446
Basevi, Signor G., i. 469
Bastiat, i. 152; born 1806, 331; account of, 331; visits England, 1845, 332; makes the acquaintance of Cobden, 1845, 332; his book on *Cobden et*

la Ligue, 333; more fit for a speculator than an agitator, 334; to Cobden on the agitation, Mar. 20, and April 20, 1847, 335; to Cobden, 509-10
Bazaar, great, at Manchester, i. 227
Bazley, Mr., urges Cobden to accept office, ii. 211
Beaconsfield, Lord, contrasts himself with Peel and Wellington, i. 372, 380, 414
Belgium, ii. 287
Bentinck, Lord George, i. 383; opinion of Free Trade and Protection, 384; Coercion, 387, 415
Berlin, Cobden at, visits Prussia and Russia, meets Humboldt, i. 477; sees Dr. Eichhorn with Mr. Howard, sees Nothomb, 477; sees M. Kuhne, an originator of Zollverein, at, 478; Free Traders of, 479; Treaty, ii. 127
Bigelow, Mr., ii. 417
Billault, M., ii. 247
Birmingham, the growth of, between 1815 and 1832, i. 106; ii. 469; Mr. Bright elected for, 1857, ii. 177
Black Sea Treaty, ii. 127
Blockade, law of, ii. 457
Bloomfield, Lord, i. 483
Board of Audit, reconstitution of, ii. 470
Board of Trade and French tariff, ii. 310
Bogorodsk, description of, i. 487
Boissy, Marquis de, ii. 284
Bolton, ii. 103
Bordeaux, i. 335; Mayor of, invites Cobden to visit King of French, between Aug. 4 and 14, 1846, 438
Borneo, ii. 22, 62
Bosphorus, Cobden's excursion up the, i. 78
Boulogne, Bois de, ii. 227
Bourbons, the, ii. 475
Bowring, Dr., visit of, to Manchester, his report on German Customs Union, i. 164
Bowring, Sir John, responsible for a Chinese war, ii. 165; and *Arrow* affair, 166-7; and Government, 167, 483
Bradford, statue of Cobden at, i. 206 *note*; Cobden at, ii. 32, 47
Brazil, i. 345
Brett, Mr., ii. 464
Bright, Mr., Cobden's first acquaintance and compact with, 1841, i. 204; extracts from his address at Bradford, July 25, 1877, 205-6; his friendship with Cobden, 205; characteristics as a speaker, 209; goes to Dublin, 226; advice to Cobden about League, 246; Cobden asks to unite about new projects, 249; articles of, in Circular, 249 *note*, 313; in Scotland, 273; denounces Brougham, 282; returned for Durham, July 1843, 284 *note*; moves a resolution for an address to Cobden at a meeting at Manchester, 1843, 285; campaign in counties, 296; accompanies Cobden to Oxford, Lancaster, and elsewhere, 307; at Hull, 311; factory question, 323; moves for a committee on Game Laws, 339; opposes the Maynooth Grant, 351; account of his voting in House with Cobden, 352 *note*; writes to Cobden, Sept. 20, 1845, retirement from public life, 359; goes to Manchester to help Cobden, 361; opinion of Edinburgh letter, 364; insists on a thorough reform in Parliament, ii. 3; goes to Ireland, 15; agrees with introduction of a Bill for assuring the tenant of the value of his improvement, 16; and Kossuth, 74; and the Ministry, 82; returned for Manchester, 90; congratulates Cobden on his pamphlet, 114; remonstrates against levity of Palmerston, 1854, 128; political foresight, 128; insulted by Palmerston, 128; position of, about Russian war, 130; burnt in effigy, reviled, 130; steadfast in attitude about Russian war, 131; and Cobden, their principles prevented future intervention, 134; why they failed in Peace policy, 134; Cobden's concern for his health, 162; at Llandudno, visits Cobden in Wales, 162; illness of, 1856, 162; at Rome, 1857, 169; defeated at Manchester, 1857, 172; letter from, to Cobden, April 16, 1857, on defeat of Manchester school, 172-5; on political future, 174; defeat of, at Manchester, Cobden's vexation at, 1857, 175; elected at Birmingham in July 1857, 177; on Cobden's career, at Rochdale, 207; and Disraeli's Reform Bill, 207; on Cobden refusing office, 217; visits Cobden in Paris, Nov. 1860, 315; and Cobden's interview with French Emperor, 315; public appearances, 341; and American War, 367; and *Trent* Affair, 384; his eloquence, 416; charges of *Times* against, 422; last letter to Cobden, March 3, 1865, 472; at Cobden's death-bed, 479; on the death of Cobden, 481
Broglie, Prince, i. 459

Brooke's Diary, Captain Mundy's, originally published by Captain Keppell, ii. 22
Brotherton, Mr., ii. 114
Brougham, Lord, measure of, for conferring on towns local representative government, 1833, i. 133, 281; writes about "the downfall of poor Mr. Cobden," 285; protest of, against interference with labour, 324; ii. 103; reference to, 379
Brussels, ii. 287
Buccleuch, Duke of, i. 309
Buckingham, Duke of, resigns seat in Peel's Cabinet, i. 233
Budget of 1842, the Free Trade, i. 255
Buller, Charles, scheme of emigration, i. 303; defends Lord Ashley, 324
Bunsen, Chevalier, ii. 157
Burke, one of the earliest assailants of Corn Laws, i. 181; ii. 106
Burmah, war in, ii. 86
Burmese War, second, Cobden's pamphlet on, ii. 165
Burns, Cobden visits birthplace of, 1826, i. 10
Buxton, Charles, ii. 466

Cabinet, disunion in, 1842, i. 233; disagreement of Peel's, 1845, 363; Peel's, separate without any decision, 363; Peel's difficulty in formation of, Nov. 1845, 365; Council, ii. 225
Cadiz, Cobden at, i. 448
Cairo, Cobden's account of, and its inhabitants, i. 61-2; massacre of Mamelukes at, 63-4
Cambridge, riots at, May 1839, i. 167
Cambridge House, Cobden at, ii. 215
Campbell, Lord, i. 412
Canal, Suez, ii. 221
Canning, Mr., i. 266; introduces Corn Bill, March 1, 1827, 178; dies 1827, 179; the Principles of, ii. 31
Carbutt, Mrs., ii. 46
Cardwell, Mr., i. 314
Carlton Club, opinion of Cobden, i. 261
Carlyle, T., i. 232, 319
Carr, Captain Stanley, i. 494
Cartwright, Mr., the consul at Constantinople, Cobden's conversations with, i. 85, 86
Cassell, Mr., ii. 27
Catechism of Corn Laws, i. 271
Catholic Emancipation, i. 350
Cavour, Count, i. 468
Cecil, Lord Robert, ii. 448
Chancery Reform, ii. 164
Chandos Clauses of Reform Act, i. 327
Changarnier, General, ii. 102
Channel, British, ii. 101
Charter, struggle for, in Manchester, 1838, i. 134
Charter, East India Company's, ii. 185
Chartism, history of, proposals for, ii. 21
Chartists, i. 267; opposition of, to League, i. 169
Chauvelin, ii. 107
Chevalier, Michel, inspired by the idea of a commercial treaty between England and France, ii. 221; French treaty, 305
China affairs, ii. 165; war, 355; British policy in, 376; traders and missionaries in, 378; non-intervention in, ii. 449
Chronicle, the, i. 311, 413
Cibrario, Signor, i. 468
Circular, suppression of, i. 314; *Anti-Corn-Law*, Journal of League, founded 1839, i. 163
Circulation, the economic, ii. 336
City, the, resents Cobden's intrusion with regard to money, ii. 37
Clare, Lord, and land-tenure, i. 350
Clark, Sir James, i. 414
Cleopatra's Needles, i. 56
Clergy, attitude of, i. 251; Church, uphold Corn Laws, 249
Clitheroe, election at, i. 25; Cobden makes his earliest speeches at, 26
Cloud, St., Cobden at, ii. 227
Coalition Government, 1855, ii. 113, 125
Cobden, William, father of Cobden, removes to outskirts of Midhurst, i. 3; character of, easy disposition, 3; life from 1809-13, 3; financial disasters, 3; farm sold, 1814, 3; settles at Westmeon, Hampshire, 4; domesticity of, letters, 6; embarrassments of, 14; removes from Westmeon to Farnham in early part of 1827, 15; living with son Frederick at Barnet, 1829, 24; loses son and daughter, 1830, 24; death of, at Droxford, June 15, 1833, 32
Cobden, Mrs., mother of Cobden, dies in 1825 of typhoid, i. 7
Cobden, Richard, born June 3, 1804, at Midhurst, Sussex, i. 2; ancestors of, 2; grandfather of, 2; goes to a Yorkshire school, 1814-19, æt. 10-15, ill-used, 4; goes to London as clerk to his uncle, 1819, 5; unpleasantness of his position, 5; offered situation at Ghent in 1822, 5; not approved of by his father, and remains in London, æt. 15-21, 5; friendship for brother Frederick, 6; kindness to father, 6; younger brothers, Charles, Miles, and Henry, 6; his diary, expenses, amusements,

æt. 20, 6; promotion of, to be traveller for his uncle's house, æt. 21, 1825, 7; his desire to know affairs of the world, great energy, 8; two first business journeys of, 8; visits Shrewsbury Abbey, Aug. Oct. 1825, 8; birthplace of Burns, 9; eye of, for character, as shown in his early letters, 11; first journey to Ireland, Sept. 1825, æt. 21, 11; describes peasantry, 12; desolation of Dublin, 12; crosses from Donaghadee to Portpatrick, Feb. 1826, æt. 22, 13; anecdote of captain of vessel in letter to brother Frederick, 13; sees Jeffrey, Cockburn, and Scott in the Court of Session, 1826, æt. 22, 13-4; financial crashes in 1825-26, 14; failure of employers, Feb. 1826, 14; spends unwelcome holiday at Westmeon, 14; family of, mercurial spirits of, under misfortune, 1826; he spends pleasant days at Isle of Wight and Chichester, 1826, æt. 22, 15; obtains situation with Partridge and Price, æt. 22, 1826, 16; his usefulness, 16; sets out on road, with muslins, etc., 16; in 1828 with two friends enters into business as salesman on commission, 16; small capital, 16; his method of working up his business, 17; introduced to Fort Brothers, æt. 24, 1828, 17; hopefulness and prospects, 1828, 18; the quickness with which the character of, widened, 1833-36, 28; writes a play, 28; first published letters and pamphlet, 1835, 29; visits America, 1835, æt. 31, 33; his opinion of, 33; vindication of his own country when in America, 1835, 37; at Niagara, 1835, 38-40; estimate of America, 1835, 41-4; return to England from America, Aug. 1835, 44; first speech at Manchester, Oct. 1, 1835, and pamphlet on Russia, 1836, 45; account of the Spanish mantilla, 47; starts for the East, Oct. 22, 1836, returns to England, April 21, 1837, 47; journals and letters, 48; visits Malta, 1836, 52; visits Alexandria, 53-6; sails up the Nile from Atfeh to Cairo, 58-9; visits Pyramids, 60; describes Cairo, and interview with Mehemet Ali, 1836, 61-70; second interview with Mehemet Ali, 71-2; description of Egyptian manufactories, 73; he leaves Alexandria, Jan. 19, 1837, 74; the massacre of Scio, 74-5; description of island, 75; arrival of, at Constantinople, 76; describes city and people, 77; voyage to Smyrna, 79; describes Smyrna and the life there, 80-6; goes to Athens, March 19, 1837, 87; at Athens, 88; from Athens to Patras, 91-3; goes to Malta, 93; conversations about the Navy and Malta, 94-5; arrives at Falmouth, April 21, 1837, 95; a profitable holiday, 96; two first pamphlets considered, 97; his philosophic gifts and definite ideas, 1835-36, 97; the influence of Combe on, 101-2; pamphlets, the doctrine of, 102; merits of, as a statesman, 102-3; perceives the necessity of adapting government to the improving condition of the people, 104; struck by increasing population in North of England, 1835, 105; the factory system, a new social element, 105; his conception of this new social problem, 106; his method of surveying society, 107; resolves questions of State policy in matters of pecuniary calculation, 107; how history bears out his principles with Government, 107-8; his scientific feeling for good government, 108; attacks in "Russia" pamphlet on the "balance of power," 112; intervention judged by experience, 112-14; the differences between commercial and military views of foreign policy, 113; his objections to the theory of intervention by Powers, 114; the source of his arguments, 114; views on retention of Gibraltar, 115; importance of American competition, 117; his pamphlets a great landmark in English political history, 121; his literary excellence, 121; his qualities as a writer, 122; without influence of classical training, 122; opinion of, on Factory Question, 1837, 125; defeat of, at Stockport, 1837, 126; explains his defeat, 126; the business of, and its value, 128; resolve of, to live free from care and business, 129; cannot make progress in society, 1838, 130; a born political man, 130; his passion for improvement, 130; Combe's system of phrenology, 131; forms Phrenological Society in Manchester, 131; fight of, for Charter, 133; visit of, to Germany, 1838, 139; his opinion on the Zollverein, 140; reasons why his sanguine views of Prussian government have not been fulfilled, 142; his account of a Sunday at Berlin, 144-5; contrasts merchants of Germany with those of England, 145-6; made alder-

man of Manchester, 1838, 151; speech of, at Manchester, Oct. 19, 1843, 153; his ample conception of the ripeness of people for agitation, 1838, 154; not the original projector, 155; included in Anti-Corn-Law Association, founded in 1838, 157; draft of his petition against Corn Laws accepted by Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Dec. 1838, 157; brings forward scheme for united action against Corn Laws, 1839, 159; compares Alliance to Hanse League, 162; organizes the Anti-Corn-Law League, March 1839, 162; instances reforms obtained, 1839, 164-5; and O'Connell, 165; the firm, new arrangements in, July 1839, 171; withdraws from old partners in business, July 1839, 172; forms a partnership with F. Cobden, 172; arrangement of business during agitation, 172; his prospects in Manchester, and business arrangements, 1839, 172-3; marriage of, May 1840, 173; married life of, 174; wedding trip, 175; modern history of Corn Law, 176; elected for Stockport, 1841, 189; takes his seat in Parliament, 1841, 190; makes his maiden speech in Parliament, Aug. 25, 1841, 191; great effect of his maiden speech, 192; arguments used by, in maiden speech, 194; his eagerness for opinion of fellow-Leaguers, 197; asks Mr. G. Wilson's opinion as to proper course, 197; makes two speeches in the House, Sept. 16, Oct. 7, 1841, 198; protest against the philanthropists, 200; compares the Thames and the Atlantic, 201; acquaintance with Bright, 1836 or 1837, compact with, 1841, 204; his friendship with Mr. Bright, 205-6; as an agitator, 206-207; his characteristics as a speaker, 208; his oratorical qualities, 210; his dexterity in dealing with material for his case, 211; his personality, 212; as an Englishman, 214; his feeling for his countrymen, 214-15; his religion, 216; his veneration, 216-17; his sympathy for religious sentiment, 218; conditions of usefulness, 219; power as an agitator, 220; his practical energy, 221; his imaginativeness, 222; his genial ideas, 224; thinks Peel's Government, 1842, will do something, 225; speaks at conference at Derby, 226; goes to the Clyde, 226; advises about bazaar of 1842, 227; delegates at Crown and Anchor, 1842, 234; denunciation of Peel's proposals, 238; speech on Peel's proposals, Feb. 24, 1842, 239; low wages not cheap labour, element in Peel's conversion, 240; replies to Ferrand's attack, 242; account of Ferrand's attack, 243-5; advice to League, 245; Mr. Bright, advice to, 246; Peace movement and Free Trade one cause, 248; projects new alliances for League, 248; reasons for not subscribing to church building fund, 250; opinion of Peel, 255; impression of Peel, 258; impressions of, on Peel, 259; thinks Peel's party willing to listen, 261; a thorn in Peel's side, 262; makes his first great speech in House of Commons, July 8, 1842, 263; great speech, 263-265; his speech, account of distress in, 264; business affairs, 267; speech to League, Sept. 1842, 267; speech to League, 268; advises League about funds, 269; receives freedom of Scotch burghs, 271; in Scotland, 272; most painful incident in parliamentary life, 276; and Sir Robert Peel, 276; speech in the House of Commons, Feb. 17, 1843, 277; explanation to Peel, 280; explanation to Mr. Roebuck, 282; dislikes individual glorification, 285; *Third Letter on a Regicide Peace*, 287; does not overrate the significance and value of large meetings, 291; at Hertford, 294; at Aylesbury, 295; at Bedford, Lincoln, Taunton, 296; his account of campaign in counties, 297-8; at Guildford, Colchester, Lewes, etc., 298; reception of, at public meetings, 301; lives at public meetings, 1843, 302; energy in attending meetings, 302; position of, 1843, 302; attacks Sugar Duties, 304; speech at Covent Garden, 304 *note*; his work in Scotland and the North, 307; at Oxford, Lancaster, Manchester, Lincoln, Salisbury, 307; at Aberdeen, Perth, Forfar, 308; in Scotland, 309; opinion of, about League organs, 313; faith in propagandism, 313; moves for a committee of inquiry into effect of protective duties on agricultural tenants and labourers, 315; motion for committee rejected, 316; position with regard to Ministerial Bill for confirmation of religious bodies in possession of property, 317; free exchange basis of prosperity, capital and labour, 320; opinion of Trades' Unions, 321;

opinion of Lord Ashley, 324; Government and Ten Hours Bill, 325; registration, 327; proposals for winning counties, 327; speech at Covent Garden, Dec. 11, 1844, 328; views on the Reform Act, 328; views on the franchise, 329; makes the acquaintance of Bastiat, 1845, 331; reception of Bastiat, 332; all letters to Bastiat destroyed, 335; speech at Oldham, 1845, on the condition of the country, 337; great speech of Mar. 13, 1845, 341; and the farmers, 344; importance of enlarging the circle of exchange, 346; influence on Peel, 347; and his appeal of 1845, 349; account of his voting in the House, 352 *note*; resolves to give up public affairs, 358; opinion of the Duke of Wellington, 366; attends meeting at Birmingham, Nov. 13, 1845, 366; meeting at Bath, Dec. 1845, 368; meeting in London, Dec. 15, 1845, 368; refuses Lord John Russell's offer of Vice-Presidency of Board of Trade, Dec. 20, 1845, 369; attitude towards Peel, 377; speaks at meeting of League after Peel's conversion, 377; health, 1846, 381; attacks Peel at Stockport meeting, 1845, 388; dislike to Whigs, their conduct in counties a test of honesty, 1846, 388; health, 1846, 391; occupation during session of 1846, 391; feels unable to pursue his career, 1846, 392; Peel an earnest convert, 393; view of his own position, thinks of retiring from political life, 1846, 394; not a rich man, 395; his fellow-workers, 395; his Free Trade labours, 395; motive for leaving Parliament, 396; views on his own position, 396; sits for the picture of the Council of the League, 415; visits Wales with his family, 437; movements, 437; new projects, 438; views on national education, 440; objects to a national testimonial, 441; lands at Dieppe, Aug. 5, 1846, *en route* to France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Russia, 444; meets French politicians in Paris, 1846, 446; conversation with Louis Philippe, 1846, 447; in Spain, 1846, goes to a bull-fight, 447; goes over Escurial with Dumas, 448; at Seville, 448; addresses traders of Cadiz, farmers of Perugia, nobles of Rome, 1846, 448; popularity among strangers, 448-9; Italian statesmen, 448; at Milan, 1846, 448; at Genoa, 449; his diaries, 449; interview with and opinion of Louis Philippe, 1846, 450; French lessons from Domville, 451; at Barcelona, Dec. 8, 1846, 451; corruption of Customs officers, 452; at Perpignan, Dec. 14, 1846, 452; sees Sir George Napier at Nice, 1846, 453; at Montpellier and Nice, 1846, 453; makes speech at dinner given to him at Genoa, 1847, 455; at Rome, Jan. 1847, 456; his description of Rome, the Vatican, etc., 457; meets Prince Broglie, Antonelli, etc., 459; entertained at public dinner, 459; hears an Italian improvisatore, 459; his life in Rome, hunting, *Roman Advertiser*, 460; sees Mr. Hemans, 460; life at Rome, 461; society in Rome, 461; paintings in Rome, 463; interview with Pope, 463; his reception, 1847, 464; calls Pope's attention to bull-fights at Madrid, 464; dines with Count Rossi, 465; travels over the Campagna, 465; at Naples, Feb. 1847, 465; at Museum, 466-7; with king, 467; at Turin, sees Count Revel, Signor Cibrario, 468; Colbertism, 468; attends meeting at Milan, address to, entertained at dinner, 468-9; sees Count Cavour, 468; at Lake Como, Desenzano, 469; the Italian lakes, 469; Signor Salevi, 470; reception at Venice, 470; reception at Trieste, 472; at Vienna, dines with Prince Metternich, etc., 472; at Dresden, 474; sees M. Falkenstein at Royal Library, 475; at Berlin, 476; visits Prince of Prussia, 476; meets Humboldt, 477; goes to Potsdam, 479; dines with king, 479; attends dinner given to him by the Free Traders of Berlin, 479; sees Mrs. Cobden off from Hamburg, then starts for Stettin, Aug. 7, 1847, 480; at Stettin, 481; opinion of the Baltic ports, Aug. 8, 1847, 481; at St. Petersburg, Aug. 20, 1847, 483; calls on Count Nesselrode, 483; description of journey from Tauroggen to, 483; at Riga, Aug. 16, 1847, 483; sees the grand parade, 484; journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow, Aug. 25, 1847, 484; from Moscow to Nishni-Novgorod, Aug. 27, 1847, 485; description of Moscow, Aug. 25, 1847, 485; pays a visit to Bogorodsk, 487; visits Moscow again, Aug. 31, 1847, 487; account of his stay in St. Petersburg, from Sept. 7 to Sept. 23, 1847,

489-94; description of Lubeck, 494; arrives at Hamburg, *en route* for England, and reaches London, Oct. 11, 1847, 495-6; returned for Stockport and West Riding, 1847, 497; speech at Aylesbury, relations of landlord and tenant, 498; business matters settled, 498; purchases Dunford, 498; his brother Frederick goes to live with him, 498; his description of Midhurst, 500; views as to England and Spain, 504; on mismanagement of Ireland, 504; and the revolution of 1848, 511; returns again to national education, 519; suggests direct over indirect taxation, 531; how seriously his attack on expenditure was taken, 531; and Bright's scheme for strengthening the Liberal Party, 1849, ii. 1; speaks at Manchester on financial reform, 1849, 1; plan for international arbitration, 9; supports the Oath abolition, 10; accompanies the Peace Society to Paris, 1849, 12; views on forty-shilling freehold, 18; resides near the Great Western Station, Paddington, 1849, 25; on temperance, 25; illustrations of temperance, 29; speaks at Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, and other northern towns, during the autumn of 1850, on Reform, 32; views on lending money to Austria and Russia, 35; and the attitude of England in the struggle, 35; speech on the Russian loan of £5,500,000, Jan. 1850, 35; powerful speech of, on the Austrian loan, Oct. 1849, 36; denounces war loan, 36; the root of his feeling about war, 38; goes to the Peace Congress at Frankfort, 50; and the Great Exhibition of 1851, 61; motion for negotiation with France, 61; receives a challenge to fight a duel, 62; resolves not to stand for West Riding again, 66; and the land question, 67; opinion as to renewal of war in favour of Hungarian liberty, 77; views on the Militia Bill, 81; on the importation of grain, 84 *note*; military feeling, 85-6; urgency of a dissolution, 88; the Queen's Speech, 94; direct attack on Palmerston, 97; speaks against the Ministerial plan, 99; his alliance with the Peace Society, 103; opinion on Whigs and Tories, 104; and the Catholic Emancipation and Reform Bill, 104; his pamphlet *1793 and 1853*, 106; shows that the French Government had given no ground of offence in 1792, 108; quotation from his pamphlet, *1793 and 1853*, 112 *note*; and Gladstone's budget, 116; lives peacefully in Sussex during the summer of 1853, 117; compiles a lucid and forcible exposure of the origin of the Burmese War, 117; goes to Peace Conference at Edinburgh, then visits Oxford, 117; Quakers and Peace movement, 118; opinion of required reforms, 120; at Oxford, 121; Whig Cabinet and Eastern Question, 123; regrets change of Lord Derby's Government, 125; naval defence of Turkey, 127; opinions on value of Sebastopol, 127; and Palmerston's policy in Russian war, 127; foresight, proofs of, 127; insulted by Palmerston, 128; position of, about Russian war, 129; reviled for attitude on Russian war, 130; steadfast attitude on Russian war, why he failed in impressing nation, 132; advocacy of non-intervention on political grounds, 132-3; and Bright, why they failed in peace policy, 133; and Bright, their principle prevented future intervention, 133; great speech against war policy, reception in House of Commons, 135; pamphlet, *What Next — and Next?* 137; opinions on Russian war, in letter to Mr. Bright, 138-42; standing armies, 144; Derby-Disraeli *exposé*, 145; out-of-doors support of peace policy, 147; on establishment of *Morning Star*, 149; Tennyson's poems, 149 and *note*; Gladstone's advocacy of invading Russia, 152; death of his son, April 6, 1856, at Weinheim, 157; great distress at death of his son, breaks the news to his wife, 158; concern for Mr. Bright's health, 1856, 162; and Bright in Wales, 1856, 162; at Dunford, 1857, Richmond, 165; China affairs, 165; *Arrow* affair, 166; brings forward motion that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into commercial relations with China, his speech, 168-9; abandons seat for West Riding, 170; goes to Huddersfield, 170; speaks about Bright, 171; at Huddersfield, beaten, 172; in Sussex, after defeat, 1857, 175; on Mr. Bright's election at Birmingham in July 1857, 178; wishes it possible to shorten speeches in House of Commons, 183; elected by com-

mittee a member of Athenæum Club, 1858, 184; Indian Mutiny, 185; Government of India and natives, 186; Indian Mutiny, 1857, 186; on contact with native races, our Indian rule, difficulties of future, 189-90; not possible to govern India well, 191; transfer of land, 195; on the demoralization of England by India, 198; and Chevalier, 199-200; view of political situation when Lord Derby formed his ministry, 200; Whig leaders and Radicals, 200; prefers Derby to Palmerston, 201; private anxieties, investment in American railways, 202; his shares in Illinois Central released by Mr. Thomasson of Bolton, 1858, 204; further loans to, 205; goes to America to examine line, 205; satisfied, 206; return from America, 1859, 207; explains to Palmerston reason for not accepting office, 212; stays with Gladstone, 222; arrives in Paris, 226; first interview with Napoleon, Oct. 27, 1859, 227; opinion of Napoleon, 232; receives invitation from Napoleon to stay with him at Compiègne, 234; record of his interview with M. Fould, 235; returns to London, 237; and Gladstone, 237; goes to Paris again, Nov. 17, 1859, 239; interview with Count Walewski, 241; interview with the Emperor at the Tuileries, 241; receives official powers, 245; memorable letter to M. Fould, 249; diary on the execution of the French treaty, 251; signs it, 252; health fails him, 252; morality of negotiation with the Empire, 255; at the Austrian Embassy, 256; on the subject of Venetia, 256; diary on the Austrian treaty, 258; interview with Prince Metternich, 1860, Austria, Italy, and Venetia, 258-63; at Cannes, 263; at Nice, 265; Lord Cowley, M. Fould, Savoy Question, 266; audience with Emperor of the French, conversation about Savoy Question, 268; naval armaments, 270; treaty of commerce with France, 271; returns to England, 272; private circumstances, 273; subscription of £40,000 to, 1860, 273; treaty of commerce with France, debates on, 275; returns again to Paris, April 20, 1860, 280; fresh labours in Paris, Nov. 5, 1860, 280; and the commission, 282; visits Rossini with Clara Novello, 283; visits Ary Scheffer, 283; meets Enfantine at Arlès-Dufour's, 284; guest of Marquis de Boissy and Countess Guiccioli, 284; and the Orleanists, 285; attends the debates in the *Corps Législatif*, 285; meets Persigny, Mar. 25, 1860, 286; diary about French tariff, 287; conversation with Prince Napoleon, 289; on the proposal for fortifications, 292; Mr. Gladstone, 296; remonstrance about England's armaments, 1860, 298; remonstrance with Lord Palmerston, 1860, French treaty, 299-300; Lord Palmerston's project for fortification, 300-1; armaments, 303; scene with Lord Cowley, 311; convention with France signed, Oct. 12, 1860, 313; abolition of passports, 1860, 317; the labours of diplomacy, 1860, 319; payments of French treaty services, 319-20; Lord Palmerston, 322 *note*; vindication of commercial treaty with France, 1860, 330; circulation, the economic, 336; direct taxation, 340; Mr. Bright's public utterances, 341; influence of Church and aristocracy, 342; conditions of political life, 343; writings of Louis Napoleon, 344; effect of going to and from London and Paris, 346; state of Europe, 1860, 347-8; gives reasons against political despondency, 349; the Turkish Question, 1861, 350; Syrian massacres, and French intervention, 351-2; sober politics of Peel and Aberdeen, 352; annexation of Savoy, 352; hopelessness of our rule in India, 354; war in China, 355; anti-social interest of great producers, 357; politics in counties, 357; life in Algiers, and the English working class, 358-9; Arlès-Dufour, and women's rights, 360; last interview with Emperor of French, 360-1; arrives in England from France, May 18, 1861, 363; reception on return from Algiers, 1861, 365; American War, 367; international maritime law, 369; *The Three Panics*, 370; battles with Lord Palmerston, 372; maritime law, 373; British policy in China, 376; traders and missionaries in China, 378; Lord Brougham, 379; Tocqueville on the right of secession, 381; *Trent* affair, 382; American War, 384-91; maritime law, 391; the commercial class, 392; luck of Lord Palmerston, 396; commercial blockades, 397; American blockade, 398; cotton famine, state of Lancashire,

399; debate on Turkey, 1863, 400; Polish insurrection, 401; American War, 402-7; fortifications of Portsmouth, 409; views on the American War, France and America, 411; conversations with Mr. Whiting, 413; Mr. Evarts, 414; Lincoln, 414; political torpor, 1863, 415; privateering, 417; correspondence and controversy with Mr. Delane and the *Times*, 419-443; feeling towards *Times* newspaper, 420; English and American Press, 421; addresses protest to *Times*, 423; refused insertion, 425; Delane's letter to, 425; letter to Delane (personally), 426; merits of *Times* controversy, 438; views of journalism, 443; and the Danish War, 444; peace policy, 447; two speeches during his last session, 449; character of President Lincoln, 450; American War, 451; Garibaldi, 451; Free Trade in France, 453; on tone of English politics, 454; international law, 456; law of blockade, 457; Danish War, 458; speech at Rochdale on the land question, Nov. 23, 1864, 460; account of himself, 463; on Canada, 465; on minority representation, 467; last letter on, 467 *note*; Durrant Cooper, 468; Canadian affairs, 477; journey to London, 478; takes lodgings in Suffolk Street, 478; illness of, 478-9; dies, April 2, 1865, 479; account of his death, 479; commemoration of, in the House, 480; traits of private character, 484; views on culture, 487; his contribution to social reform, 488

Cobden, Mrs., Continental tour, Aug. 1846, i. 445; violent grief at death of her son, ii. 159-61; alarming condition of, 162-3

Cobden, Frederick, eldest brother of Cobden, i. 6; returns from America, 1824, unprosperous, 6; extract from letter of, on mother's death, 7; a timber merchant at Barnet, his ill-success, 1829, 23; partnership with Cobden, July 1839, 172; business qualities, 172; death of, 1858, 498

Cobden, Charles, i. 6

Cobden, Henry, i. 6; meets Cobden in New York, 1835, i. 33

Cobden, Miles, i. 6

Cockburn and Cobden, 1826, i. 13; supports Lord Palmerston, ii. 42

Coercion Bill for Ireland, 1846, i. 386; rejected, June 26, 1846, 415

Colchester, Free Trade battle at, i. 299

Cole, Mr., uncle of Cobden, i. 126

Cole, H., letter to R. Cobden, i. 230-2

Coles, Captain Cowper, ii. 410

Collett, Mr., i. 402

Cologne, Cobden at, ii. 51

Colonial trade, i. 304

Colquhoun, Mr., i. 400

Combe, George, the influence of Cobden on, i. 101, 102; system of phenology, Cobden drawn to, 131; ii. 25

Commerce, Chamber of, Manchester, Cobden's draft of a petition against the Corn-Laws accepted by, Dec. 1838, i. 157-8; French treaty of, ii. 271; laid before Parliament, Feb. 10, 1860, 274; policy of, 326-37

Committee on Imports, report of, i. 252-3

Commons League, proposals for, 1848, ii. 1; failure of, 2

Como, Lake, i. 469

Conseil Supérieur, ii. 280

Conspiracy to Murder Bill, Feb. 20, Mr. Gibson beats Lord Palmerston on, ii. 198

Constantinople, Cobden's account of, i. 76; the plague, 77; the Bosphorus, 78

'*Constitution, English*,' i. 141

Cooper, Durrant, ii. 468

Coppdene, Adam de, i. 2

Cormenin, Conseiller d'État, ii. 51

Corn Bill, Peel's new, i. 252; second reading of, passed Mar. 27, 1846, 415; passed, June 26, 1846, by a majority of 73, 416

Corn Law, existing when Cobden's agitation began, i. 179-80; effects of, in foreign countries, 181; repeal of, break up of all parties, 431

Corn-Law, Anti-, League, i. 152; Association, formed in 1836, 155; its members, proved impotent, 155; foundation of, in Manchester, 157

Corn Law of 1815, 1822; bill of 1827, Canning's; 1828, Wellington, Duke of, i. 178-180

Corn Laws, modern history of, by Cobden, April 16, 1839, in the *Circular*, i. 176; Burke and, 181; in background, 314

Cornu, Madame, ii. 361

Corps Législatif, ii. 285

CORRESPONDENCE—

Ashworth, H., April 12, 1842, i. 248; Feb. 19, 1846, 404-5; May 20, 1846, 412; 1846, 438; Oct. 7, 1850, 499; July 21, 1848, 522; Dec. 13, 1849, ii. 28; Dec. 19, 1855, 154-5; Oct. 16, 1857, 185-8; Aug. 27, 1860, 355; Feb. 7, 1862, 391; Sept. 3, 1864, 456; Sept. 9, 1846, 457; July 26, 1864, 458; July 1864, 459

CORRESPONDENCE (*continued*):—
Baines, E., Oct. 25, 1842, i. 269-71; Mar. 8, 1843, 285; Dec. 25, 1845, 528
Bastiat, M., i. 510
Bigelow, Mr., ii. 417
Bright, Mr., i. 246; May 12, 1842, 249; June 21, 1843, 313-14; Sept. 18, 1847, 497, 503; Nov. 16, 1848, 532-3; Dec. 23, 1848, ii. 3; Oct. 1, 1849, 16; Nov. 4, 1849, 20; Dec. 6, 1849, 21; Dec. 8, 1849, 23; April 18, 23, 1850, 48; Nov. 22, 1850, 54; Sept. 29, 1851, 63; Oct. 1, 1851, 65-8; Oct. 20, 1851, 68-71; Nov. 7, 1851, 71-2; Nov. 6, 1851, 72-5; Nov. 13, 1851, 75; Nov. 9, 1853, 119; Nov. 22, 1853, 120; Sept. 14, 1854, 137; Oct. 1, 1854, 138; 1854, 140; Jan. 5, 1855, 141-3; Feb. 11, 1855, 145; Sept. 30, 1855, 147; Aug. 6, 1855, 149; Aug. 8, 1855, 150; Sept. 18, 1855, 151; Aug. 24, 1857, 188; Sept. 22, 1857, 191; Nov. 17, 1859, 232; Nov. 20, 1859, 234; Dec. 29, 1859, 244; 1860, 296-300; Feb. 4, 1861, 320-3; 1860, 329; Dec. 16, 1859, 338-9; Dec. 29, 1859, 340; Mar. 18, 1861, 349; Dec. 6, 1861, 384; April 22, 1863, 410; Sept. 8, 1863, 411; Oct. 12, 1863, 413; Oct. 17, 1863, 413; Oct. 4, 1864, 414; Jan. 16, 1865, 466; Jan. 22, 1865, 469; Feb. 23, 1865, 472; Mar. 3, 1865, 472; Mar. 15, 1865, 474
Chevalier, M., Oct. 5, 1855, ii. 152; July 13, 1858, 199; Aug. 21, 1861, 379; Dec. 14, 1861, 385; Feb. 14, 1862, 393; Mar. 4, 1862, 394; Mar. 17, 1862, 393; Mar. 18, 1862, 395; Aug. 7, 1862, 397; June 2, 1863, 400; June 22, 1863, 401; May 3, 1864, 451; June 27, 1864, 453; Nov. 5, 1864, 454
Cobden, Mrs., Mar. 11, 14, 1845, i. 341, 342; Feb. 11, 1845, 352; April 11, 14, 28, and June 19, 1845, 352-3; June 20, 1845, 354; June 24, 1845, 354; April 7, 1845, 355; April 18, 1845, 355-6; May 26, 1845, 356; June 6, 1845, 356; June 19, 24, 1845, 357; Dec. 4, 1845, 367; Jan. 23, 26, 1846, 401; Jan. 24, 1846, 402; Mar. 30, 1846, 404; April 4, 6, 1846, 406; April 23, 25, 27, 1846, 407; April 29, May 2, 8, 1846, 408; May 11, 13, 1846, 409; May 16, 1846, 410; May 18, 1846, 411; May 20, 22, 1846, 412; May 23, 1846, 413; June 13, 16, 18, 1846, 414; June 23, 26, 1846, 415; Feb. 22, 1848, 513; Mar. 8, 10, 14, 1848, 515; Mar. 18, 1848, 516; Mar. 21, 27, 1848, 517; April 10, 1848, 518; April 15, May 13, 1848, 519; Nov. 30, Dec. 8, 1848, 530; Aug. 19, 1849, ii. 12; Aug. 25, 1849, 13; Aug. 28, 1849, 15; Dec. 18, 1849, 46; Dec. 19, 21, 1849, 47; July 2, 4, 1850, 49; Aug. 17, 1850, 50; Aug. 23, 1850, 51; April 22, 1851, 59; Mar. 13, 1852, 77; Mar. 5, 1852, 77; 1852, 94; Jan. 27, 1853, 114; Jan. 31, 1853, 114-15; 1854, 134; 1855, 135; June 30, 1859, 210
Cobden, Miss (sister), Sept. 3, 1838, i. 143-5
Cobden, Frederick W., Feb. 5, 1826, i. 9; Sept. 20, 1825, 13; 1831, 21-2; Jan. 30, 1832, 22; April 12, 1832, 22; Sept. 1832, 24 *note*; July 27, 1833, 30; June 6, 1834, 31; June 7, 1835, 33; June 15, 16, 1835, 34-5; June 21, 1835, 38-40; June 22, 1835, 40; July 5, 1835, 36-8, 41-4; Mar. 3, 1837, 87; April 18, 1837, 87-8; Nov. 11, 1836, 123; Jan. 4, 1837, 123-4; Jan. 28, 1837, 124-5; Feb. 24, 1837, 128; Oct. 26, 1838, 128, 135-6; Oct. 5, 1838, 137; Sept. 11, 1838, 141-2; Oct. 6, 1838, 145-6; June 6, 12, 1837, 147-50; June 16, 1841, 189; July 3, 1841, 190; Aug. 24, 1841, 190-1; Aug. 26, 1841, 191-2; Aug. 29, 1841, 196; Sept. 27, 1841, 199-200; June 22, 1842, 233; Feb. 28, 1842, 243-5; Mar. 10, 1842, 247; Mar. 12, 1842, 258-9; Mar. 22, 1842, 259-260; April 11, 1842, 260; June 22, 1842, 260-1; July 14, 1842, 261; July 20, 1842, 262; Jan. 5, 1843, 272; Feb. 17, 1843, 283-5; Feb. 23, 1843, 285; Mar. 11, 1843, 289-290; April 10, 1843, 290; June 5, 1843, 297; July 20, 1843, 297-8; Aug. 17, 1843, 306; Oct. 27, 1843, and Jan. 22, 1844, 307-10; June 4, 1844, 317; June 5, 1844, 318; Aug. 16, 1842, 321; Mar. 16, 1844, 324; Mar. 23, 1844, 325; Aug. 8, 1844. 355; Feb. 9, 1846, 404; Mar. 6, 1846, 405; Mar. 25, 1846, 406; May 15, 1846, 409; May 19, 1846. 411; June 10, 1846, 413
Cobden, Charles, Jan. 8, 1837, i. 48
Cole, Colonel, Mar. 20, 1865, ii. 476
Cole, Mr., i. 126-7
Combe, George, Aug. 23, 1836, i. 131-2; Mar. 9, 1841, 150; Aug. 1, 1846, 218; Dec. 29, 1845, 224;

CORRESPONDENCE (*continued*):—
Feb. 23, 1845, 338-9; Dec. 13, 1845, 368; Dec. 29, 1845, 378; Feb. 1846, 379-80; Mar. 7, 1846, 391-3; Aug. 1, 1846, 391-3; July 14, 1846, 439-43; Feb. 29, 1848, 514; April 24 and May 15, 1848, 519-20; July 23, 1848, 520; Aug. 28, 1848, 522-4; Oct. 4, 1848, 524-7; Oct. 28, 1848, 527; Jan. 5, 1849, ii. 6; Feb. 8, 1849, 7; April 9, 1849, 8; June 19, 1849, 10; Nov. 9, 1850, 52; May 16, 1858, 196-7
Delane, John T., Dec. 9, 1863, ii. 426, 431
Daily Telegraph, ii. 440
Ewart, Mr., June 6, 1857, ii. 181
Fitzmayer, Colonel, Jan. 10, 1855, ii. 143; Oct. 18, 1857, 194; Dec. 3, 1861, 382
Foster, George, April 14, 1836, i. 26-7; 1836, 27; Nov. 28, 1836, 47; Dec. 22, 1836, 72-4
Gilpin, Mr., Mar. 28, 1858, ii. 197; Oct. 30, 1858, 198
Gladstone, Mr., Jan. 7, 1860, ii. 248, 250; Feb. 10, 1865, 470; Feb. 13, 1865, 470
Greg, W. R., May 15, 1848, i. 521; Mar. 13, 1851, ii. 57; May 21, 1851, 60
Hadfield, G., July 5, 1850, ii. 45
Hargreaves, Mr., i. 214; April 7, 1857, ii. 177; May 2, 1860, 285; Nov. 1860, 318-19; Mar. 14, 1860, 344; April 23, 1860, 346; May 7, 1860, 347; June 5, 1860, 349; 1860, 353; Aug. 4, 1860, 354; Mar. 1, 1861, 358; 1861, 376; June 22, 1861, 381; Aug. 7, 1862, 396; Oct. 25, 1862, 398; April 5, 1863, 415; Feb. 16, 1861, 421; April 10, 1863, 489
Hatherton, Lady, Nov. 6, 1862, ii. 399
Hunt, W. C., Oct. 21, 1836, i. 535
Hunter, T., Mar. 12, 1846, i. 393-7; April 2, 1846, 397-9
Lattimore, R., April 20, 1864, i. 294 *note*
Letter to parents whilst at Yorkshire school, Mar. 25, 1817, i. 5
Lindsay, Mr. W. S., Mar. 24, 1856, i. 17; 1857, ii. 177; April 26, 1861, 373; Feb. 25, 1861, 420
Livesey, Mr., Oct. 10, 1849, ii. 25
Lucas, S., July 27, 1862, i. 203; Aug. 16, 1860, ii. 352; 1860, 356; Feb. 23, 1861, 357; Oct. 17, 1861, 380
CORRESPONDENCE (*continued*):—
Maeren, Mr. Van der, Oct. 5, 1856, i. 333
McLaren, Mr., Sept. 19, 1853, ii. 117
Mellor, James, April 18, 1850, ii. 47
Moffatt, Mr., April 7, 1857, ii. 175; Dec. 3, 1857, 182; 1858, 203
Palmerston, Lord, June 27, 1859, ii. 209; April 13, 1861, 324
Parkes, J., Feb. 16, 1846, i. 388-90; May 26, 1856, 255, 374; June 10, 1857, 385; Dec. 28, 1856, 445-7; May 23, 1856, ii. 159; June 4, 1856, 160; Nov. 11, 1856, 162; Dec. 11, 1856, 163; Aug. 9, 1857, 178; July 28, 1857, 179; Feb. 11, 1860, 360
Paulton, Mr., July 4, 1846, i. 437-8; Jan. 1862, 385; Feb. 2, 391; Jan. 8, 1863, 407; Jan. 18, 1863, 408; Feb. 3, 1863, 409; Jan. 25, 1865, 463
Peel, Sir R., June 23, 1846, i. 418-26
Potter, Edmund, i. 399-401; Mar. 15, 1851, ii. 58
Potter, Mr. T. B., May 10, 1864, ii. 452 *note*; Mar. 22, 1865, 467 *note*; Feb. 23, 1865, 473
Potter, Sir Thomas, 1843, i. 286-7; Mar. 1, 1843, 287-8
Russell, Lord John, Nov. 12, 1855, ii. 136; July 31, 1860, Aug. 2, 1860, 302
St. John's, Rector of, Manchester, Feb. 1841, i. 250-1
Sisters, Nov. 11, 1836, i. 49-52; Nov. 30, 1836, 52-7; Dec. 20, 1836, 57-71
Slagg, J., Sept. 5, 1859, ii. 273
Spencer, Rev. Thomas, April 23, 1849, i. 219-20
Sturge, Mr., June 10, 1846, i. 388; July 16, 1846, ii. 2; Feb. 19, 1851, 55; Feb. 25, 1851, 56; Mar. 11, 1852, 85; Mar. 20, 1852, 87; May 5, 1852, 89; June 9, 1852, 89; Sept. 14, 1852, 91; Sept. 20, 1852, 92
Sumner, Mr. Charles, Nov. 29, 1861, ii. 386; July 11, 1862, 402; Feb. 13, 1863, 403; April 2, 1863, 404; May 2, 1863, 405; May 22, 1863, 406; Aug. 7, 1863, 406; Aug. 18, 1864, 450; Jan. 11, 1865, 464
Tait, Mr., July 3, 1838, i. 134; Aug. 17, 1838, and May 5, 1837, 138-9
White, Mr., Nov. 22, 1857, ii. 195
Wilson, G., Sept. 1841, i. 197-8; Nov. 1841, 227-8; Feb. 27, 1842, 245-6; Jan. 18, 1843, 271-2; Oct.

24, 1843, 311; Feb. 28, 1845, 340; Jan. 29, 1846, 403; Feb. 28, 1852, ii. 82; Feb. 28, 1852, 83; Mar. 20, 1852, 87; Mar. 23, 1852, 88; Aug. 18, 1852, 90; Oct. 4, 1852, 93
Corsini, Prince, i. 459, 460
Counties, campaign in, i. 293-6; proposals to win, 327
Country, how it receives Peel's proposals, i. 238; opinion about Russian War, ii. 129
Covent Garden, League Bazaar at, in the spring of 1845, i. 337
Cowley, Lord, ii. 227, 237, 239, 245, 290, 304; Savoy question, 293; French treaty, 311
Crawford, Sharman, i. 191
Crimean War, commencement of, 1854, ii. 125; origin of, 125; end of, 1856, 155
Crisis, Ministerial, the, 1845, i. 366
Crosse Hall, Cobden's business at, i. 172
Crown and Anchor, the, i. 289
Czar of Russia, ii. 32

Daily Telegraph, ii. 440
Dalhousie, Lord, declines office, 1846, i. 433
Danish War, ii. 444, 458
Dantzic, i. 482
Dardanelles, fleet despatched to, ii. 39
Débats, ii. 455
Delane, Mr., editor of *Times*, thinks Cobden and Bright might have been Ministers, ii. 136; social distinctions, 421; controversy with Cobden, 419-443; letter of, to Cobden, giving reason for not publishing protest, 425; virtual surrender of, 436
Democratic Reform, movement of, ii. 24
Denmark, ii. 111; and the British Government, ii. 445
Deputation of bankers and traders in London to Emperor of the French, ii. 116
Derby-Disraeli *exposé*, ii. 145
Derby, Lord, ii. 44, 80, 82, 83, 85, 88, 454; resigns, Dec. 17, 1852, 99; second administration, 1858, 200; on the policy of 1860, 276
Desenzano, i. 470
Dickens, Charles, the influence of his early novels, i. 100; ii. 181
Dieterici, M., Cobden visits, at Berlin, an earnest Free Trader, i. 478
Disraeli, Mr., says Pitt was first Free Trader, i. 257, 262, 280; on Free Trade, 346; attacks Peel, 1845, 347; speaks of Cobden, 347; attitude towards Peel, 347; leads the Protectionists in 1848, 513; recognizes the possibility of public opinion being brought round to Cobden's side, 1848, 531; referred to, ii. 31, 41, 44, 88, 98, 99, 116, 145, 146, 460; moves an amendment to Villiers' address on the Duke of Wellington's funeral, 95; funeral oration on the Duke of Wellington, 95 *note*; budget, 97; conceives the idea of detaching the Manchester party from Whigs and Peelites, 98; defeated by a majority of nineteen, 99; introduces his Reform Bill, Feb. 1859, 207; treaty of commerce with France, 275; Free Trade, 328; and Schleswig-Holstein affair, 447; vote of censure on Lord Palmerston, 447; on the death of Cobden, 480
Distress of country, debate on, i. 262
Domestic Legislation, Cobden's opinion of, ii. 163
Don Pacifico, debate, ii. 30; affair of, 444
D'Orsay, Count, i. 414
Dresden, communication with Mr. Falkenstein at Royal Library, i. 475
Droxford, Cobden's father dies at, June 15, 1833, i. 32
Drummond, Mr., private secretary to Peel, shot, i. 276, 379
Drury Lane, meetings at, i. 302
Dublin, Cobden's early impression of, 1825, æt. 21, i. 12
Ducie, Lord, i. 307
Duff, Mr. E. Grant, ii. 369 *note*
Dumas, Alexandre, i. 447
Duncan, Lord, i. 318
Dunford, farmhouse where Cobden was born, i. 2; Cobden at, April 22, 1851, ii. 59; 1857, 165
Dungannon, Lord, beats Bright at Durham, April 4, 1843, unseated for bribery, July 1843, i. 284 *note*
Durham, Bishop of, ii. 46

Eastbourne, ii. 8
Eastern Question, 1854, ii. 123
Economic Sophism of Bastiat, i. 335
Economist, the, i. 314
Edinburgh, Cobden attends Peace Conference, 1853, ii. 117
Edinburgh Letter, the, of Lord John Russell, 1845, i. 364
Edinburgh Review, ii. 145
Education, National League and, i. 303; popular, 322
Egerton, Lord, i. 401
Eichhorn, Dr., i. 477
Election of 1841, state of parties, i. 190; general, July 1852, ii. 90; 1857, 171-2

Eliot, Forster's *Life of*, ii. 468, 486
Ellice, Edward, i. 413
Emmanuel, Victor, ii. 257
Emperor of Austria, ii. 32
England, condition of, i. 153; pestilent effects of bread tax on, 153; the growth of the League in, against the Corn Law, 291; condition of, 319, ii. 36, 46; social state of, 109-110; cat's-paw of European Powers, 124; popular feeling in, about Eastern Question, 1854, 124; and France, estrangement between, about Conspiracy to Murder Bill, 199; feeling in, against France, 292; warlike demonstration against France, 1860, 299-303; working classes of, 358
England, Ireland, and America, Cobden's first pamphlet, 1835, i. 29; goes through several editions, 1835, 46; Cobden's pamphlet on, 108; the disadvantages of the English manufacturer, 109
English policy in 1793, ii. 106; politics, tone of, 454
Europe, state of, Cobden on, 1860, ii. 347-8
Evarts, Mr., ii. 414
Examiner, ii. 86
Exchange, free, Cobden's remedy, i. 320
Exhibition, Great, opening of the, 1851, ii. 61

Factory legislation, i. 322; Bill, Sir James Graham's, withdrawal of, 322; reintroduction, clauses of, 323; question, part of great struggle, 323
Famine, Cotton, ii. 399
Farmers, tenant, distressed state of, i. 339; account of, 345
Farnham, William Cobden removes to, in 1827, i. 15; association of, with Swift and Cobbett, 15
Faucher, Léon, i. 451
Ferrand, Mr., violent attack of, on Cobden, i. 241
Finlay on the Pacifico affair, i. 40
Finsbury, ii. 183
Fitzgerald, Seymour, ii. 472
Fitzwilliam, Lord, i. 270
Florence, Cobden at, i. 448
Florida affair, ii. 465
Fonblanque, i. 147
Fcoah, Cobden at, i. 59
Foreign Office, procrastination of, 1860, ii. 313
Forfar, Cobden at, i. 308
Fort Brothers and Co. aid Cobden in establishing his business, 1828, i. 17
Fortescue, Lord and Lady, i. 412
Foster, George, Cobden's partner at Sabden, a Liberal of finest type, i. 24-6
Fould, M., ii. 233 *et seq.*, 266, 286
Fox, Charles James, and the League, i. 330, 432; ii. 108
Fox, George, ii. 22, 103, 114
France, Cobden's first visit to, 1833, i. 30; scarcely any railways and no penny postage in, 1846, 334; suspends specie payment, 517; ii. 36; social state of, 109-10; and America, 1864, 411; Free Trade in, 453
Frankfort, Peace Congress at, ii. 50
Free Trade, banquet to supporters of, Manchester, 1839, i. 158; charter of, Imports Committee Report, 254-255; original development of, 258; related to all questions of condition of people, 302; ii. 24, 37; bearings of, 335
Freemasons' Tavern, i. 289
French diplomatic conspiracy, ii. 43
French empire, ii. 101
French tariff, debate on, in the House, ii. 275; nature of, 278 *note*
French treaty, resistance to, ii. 250; signed, Jan. 29, 1867, 251
Fuggers, the, ii. 490

Garibaldi, visit of, to London, ii. 451
Gazette, the, ii. 91
Genoa, Cobden at, 1847, i. 455
Germanism in English Court, ii. 294
Germany, Cobden starts for, in Aug. 1838, i. 139; acquires information about Corn Laws, 139; society in, Cobden's account of, 143; ii. 36
Gibraltar, Cobden's visit to, and description of, i. 49-51; Cobden's views on the retention of, 115
Gibson, Mr., ii. 84; returned for Manchester, 90; defeated at Manchester, 1857, 172; beats Lord Palmerston on his Conspiracy to Murder Bill, Feb. 20, 1857, ii. 198; 466
Girardin, Emile de, Cobden dines with, ii. 246, 287
Gladstone, Mr., revision of the tariff, i. 256, 277; Free Trade, 305; opinion of League, 316; views as to the Maynooth Grant, 351; resigns the office of President of the Board of Trade, 1845, 351 *note*; ii. 41, 466; description of interference, 43, 88, 93; budget, 1853, 116, 152; 217, 237, 241; speech on Treaty of Commerce with France, 274; position, 1860, 295, 297; Free Trade, 327; French Treaty, 1860, 337; *The Three Panics*, 370
Goulburn, Mr., ii. 88

Government, British, increased expenditure on armaments, i. 502; intervention of, in foreign affairs, 1847, 502; propose an increase in the income-tax, ignominiously withdrawn, 531; defeated on the Bill to lower the county franchise to £10, ii. 56 *note*; and Denmark, 445, 454
Graham, Sir James, speech of, against Mr. Villiers' motion, March 15, 1839, i. 170; Factory Bill, 1844, 322; its withdrawal, 323; reintroduction, 323; clauses of, 323; on renewed agitation after Peel's resignation, 1845, 365; declines office, 1846, 432; ii. 41; 87
Granville, Lord, attempts to form a Ministry, ii. 208, 308
Greece, the King and Queen of, i. 89; Cobden in, 1837, 87-93; claims against, ii. 40
Grenville, Lord, ii. 106
Grey, Lord, the cause of Lord John Russell's inability to form a ministry, 1845, i. 371; ii. 466
Grote, Cobden's estimate of, i. 148
Guardian, Manchester, i. 46; ii. 76, 77
Guizot, M., i. 445, 446
Gurney, Mr., i. 461; ii. 22, 103

Hall, Sir Benjamin, i. 357
Hamburg, i. 495
Hampshire, New, ii. 28
Hampton Court Gardens, i. 414
Hartington, Lord, ii. 208
Haydon, ii. 133
Haynau, General, ii. 52
Hemans, Mr., i. 460
Henley, Mr., ii. 207
Herbert, Sidney, i. 342; declines office, 1846, 432; ii. 88, 93
Herbert paints a picture of the Council of the League, i. 415
Herbet, M., ii. 287
Hertford, Cobden speaks at, i. 294
Hewley's, Lady, bequest, i. 317
Heyshott, hamlet near Midhurst, i. 1
Hill, Rowland, i. 213; ii. 318
History of the Netherlands, Motley's, ii. 486
Holland, ii. 36
Household Suffrage and Corn Laws, effect of, on parties, i. 372
Howard, Mr., i. 477
Howick, Lord, i. 352; on the Queen's speech, 276
Hull, Cobden at, i. 310
Humboldt, Baron von, and Cobden at Berlin, i. 477
Hume, David, i. 516
Hume, Deacon, i. 270
Hume, Joseph, i. 263
Hungary, ii. 39
Huskisson, Mr., i. 434; legislation of, 1823-25, 177, 178; ii. 250

Illinois Central Railway, Cobden's investments in, and anxieties about, ii. 202-3
Illustrated Weekly News, ii. 86
Ilyssus, ii. 486
Import Duties, Report of Committee on, and Peel, i. 252
Income Tax, Tories and the, i. 259
India, Cobden on government of, 1857, ii. 186; demoralizes England, 187; hopelessness of our rule in, 354
India, West, sugar growers, i. 304
Indian Mutiny, ii. 185
International law, ii. 456
Intervention, the policy of, Cobden discusses in his *Russia* pamphlet, i. 110-18; extravagance of, 118
Inverness, Duchess of, i. 413
Ireland, first visit of Cobden to, Oct. 21, 1825, i. 11; description of peasantry, 12; duties on corn in, 362; failure of potato crop in, 1844, 363; views on, in a letter to George Combe, 522; mismanagement of, ii. 57
Irish vote indispensable to the Whig Ministry since the Reform Bill, ii. 46
Iron, duty on, i. 481
Italian statesmen, i. 448
Italy, landed property in, 1847, i. 455; and Austria, ii. 259-63

James, G. P. R., advocates protection at Canterbury, i. 293
Jameson, Mrs., i. 462
Jeffrey and Cobden, 1826, i. 13
Johnson, Dr., ii. 115
Journalism, Cobden's view of, ii. 443
Journalists, Cobden makes acquaintance of some, 1837, i. 147

Kalamaki, in Gulf of Corinth, Cobden arrives at, i. 90
Kay, Mr., ii. 20
Kemp, Mr., ii. 462
Kendal, Cobden at, i. 307
Keppell, Captain, ii. 22
Kinglake, Mr., i. 113; ii. 132
Kingston, Cobden at, i. 414
Klapka, General, ii. 52, 233
Kossuth, ii. 32; comes to England, 69; speech at Winchester, 70; and Bright, 74; indignation with regard to the Blue Book on the Hungarian struggle, 76
Kübeck, Baron, Cobden meets, at Vienna, i. 474

Kuhne, M., Cobden visits, at Berlin, i. 478

Labour legislation, i. 326; difficulty in obtaining, 502
Lacroix, M., i. 453
Lafitte, M., ii. 253
Lakes, Italian, i. 469
Lancashire, calico printers' agitation against heavy duties, 1825-1830, i. 20; duty taken off, 1831, 20-21; Chartist disturbances in, 1838, 137; men of, and bread tax, 1838, beginning of struggle, 153; ii. 24
Lancashire, South, ii. 25
Land, transfer of, ii. 195
Lansdowne, Lord, i. 413
Lattimore, Mr., i. 294, 341
Law, International, ii. 456
Law, International Maritime, ii. 369-75
Lawrence, Mr., ii. 70
League, idea of the, i. 159; Anti-Corn-Law, organization of, March 1839, 162; lectures of, 166; vilified in Press, 168; attitude of, during elections of 1841, 187; tactics of, during elections of 1841, 188; the two great spokesmen of, 208; as a theme for popular agitation, 210; moral triumph of, 228; organ of, 228; delegates from, at House of Commons, 234; disappointment of, 245; Cobden's advice to, 245; and Peel's tariff, 257; Cobden speaks to, 267; and the workmen, 268; increased expense, 269; funds of, 269; not credited with all its work, 270; renewed activity of, 271; and Scotland, 271; reception of League in Scotland, 274; threatened proceedings against, 275; meetings to protest against the bad treatment of Cobden, 285; the enemies of, on Cobden, 285; meeting in Drury Lane Theatre, 289; victory at Colchester, 299; Mr. Bright on work of, Oct. 1843, 300; national education and, 303; and emigration, 303; in Scotland, 307-310; in Midland counties, 310; new organ, 313; abuse of, by Ferrand, etc., 315; account of the subscription, 336; change of tactics, 1845, 338; object, clearly and intelligibly established, 340; great meeting at Manchester, Dec. 1845, 365; operations of, 377; money, and gain in counties by influence, 389; isolation the true policy, 1846, 390; final meeting, 433; its work, 435; secret of its power, 435; voted a present of £10,000 to Mr. G. Wilson, 1846, 443 *note*; discussion, on a joint testimonial to Cobden, Bright, and Villiers, 443; great meeting at Manchester, ii. 93
League, establishment of, i. 314; the organ of the Free Traders, the conduct of, 228
Lecturers, the League sends, to the country, 1839, i. 166; ill reception of, in country, 167; reports of, on their experiences, lends fresh hope to Leaguers, 169; at work in country, 226-7
Leeds, ii. 22, 32; Cobden at, 46
Lewis, Mr., of Regent Street, advances Cobden capital for a business, in 1828, i. 16
Lewis, Sir George, and the Corn Laws, i. 292; on Crimean War, ii. 145
L'Huys, Drouyn de, ii. 286; notes to Prussia, 147
Liddell, Mr., speech on the debate of Feb. 3, 1843, i. 288
Lincoln, President, ii. 414; character of, 450
Lindsay, W. S., conversation with Cobden about American railways, ii. 202; Cobden no speculator, 203
Little, Captain, i. 484
Liverpool Financial Reform Association initiate the League, i. 530
Lombardy, cession of, ii. 257, 268
London Tavern, ii. 33
Lothian, East, farmers of, i. 307
Louis Philippe, conversation with Cobden, 1846, i. 447; interview of Cobden with, conversation, etc., 450
Lubeck, journey to, from St. Petersburg, Sept. 29, 1841, i. 494

Macaulay, Lord, i. 183; congratulates Cobden, 410; ii. 218
M'Naghten, Daniel, the assassin of Mr. Drummond, i. 276
Maffei, Chevalier, i. 469
Magne, M., ii. 242, 248
Mallet, Sir Louis, sent on a commission to France, ii. 277, 333
Malta, visit of Cobden to, i. 52; opinions of Cobden about, as a naval station, 93; leaves, April 4, 1837, 94
Manchester, Cobden's early enthusiasm for, i. 21; growth of, 25; the growth of, from 1815 to 1832, 106; parties in, during struggle for charter, 135; Germany contrasted with, 141; intolerance of, 150; received charter of incorporation, 1838, 150; headquarters of Anti-Corn-Law League, 162; country in

debt to, 271; meeting at, of 8000 people, 285; meeting at, 301; Free Trader returned for, 1843, 312; a meeting held in the great hall in commemoration of the expiration of duty on corn, Jan. 31, 1849, ii. 6, 24, 25; Free Trade Hall of, 28, 32; Cobden at, 54, 75, 82; Newall's Buildings, 84; great meeting of the League at, 93; Peace Conference at, 113
Manchester Examiner, ii. 22
Manchester Guardian, i. 46, ii. 76; and the Kossuth demonstration, 77
Manchester School, policy of, on the Crimean War, 1854, ii. 126; defeat of, at elections, 1857, 172
Mantua, fortress of, ii. 257
Manufacturers, country party and, i. 242
Maritime Law, ii. 373, 391; proposed changes in, 374
Markets, regulation of, by legislation, i. 321
Marlborough, Duke of, ii. 92
Marshall, Mr., ii. 46
Martineau, Miss, i. 378
Massacres, Syrian, French intervention, ii. 352
Maule, Fox, i. 272
Mauri, Signor A., i. 469
Maynooth Grant, second reading carried by a majority of 147, 1845, i. 351
Medici, the, ii. 490
Mehemet Ali, Cobden describes his reception by, and interview with, at Cairo, Dec. 1836, i. 66; his description of, 67-8; his conversation, 69; Cobden's second interview with, Dec. 26, 1836, 71; Cobden's opinions of, 72
Melbourne, Lord, Municipal Reform Act of, i. 132; cabinet of, want of fiscal skill, 182; budget of, 1841, 183; defeat of his ministry, appeals to the country, 1841, 186; resignation of, Aug. 28, 1841, 191
Men-of-war, English, the carriers of royalty, i. 89
Mercury, the, ii. 65
Mérimée, Prosper, opinion of Cobden, i. 214, ii. 483
Mersey, ii. 210
Methuen Treaty, 1753, ii. 332
Metternich, Prince, i. 472, 474, ii. 256; interview with Cobden, Austria, Italy, and Venetia, 1860, 258-63
Meyendorff, Baron Alexander, i. 486; views on protection in Russia, 489
Midhurst, the scenery about, i. 1; birthplace of Cobden, 2; description of, 500-501
Milan, Cobden at, i. 468
Mill, J. Stuart, ii. 466, 491
Millingen, Dr., Cobden visited by, at Smyrna, i. 83
Milnes, Monckton, i. 414, ii. 227
Mines and Collieries Act, i. 322
Ministerial proposals for parliamentary reform, ii. 60
Ministers, great meeting of, of all religions, in Manchester, i. 193-4
Mocquard, M., ii. 243
Moffatt, Mr., i. 406; at Cobden's death-bed, ii. 479
Molesworth, Sir W., Cobden meets, i. 149; represented philosophic radicalism in the Cabinet, ii. 99; and Cobden, 135
Moniteur, the, ii. 249, 286, 307
Montpensier, Duke of, i. 447
Moore, Mr., i. 296
Morning Post calumniates the League, i. 168, 299; and American War, ii. 390
Morning Star, the, ii. 149
Morocco, ii. 238
Morpeth, Lord, i. 413; congratulates Cobden, 410
Moscow, Cobden returns to, i. 487
Mosley, Sir Oswald, i. 134
Movement, Peace, misrepresentation of, ii. 118
Muir, Mr., i. 57
Mundy, Captain, ii. 22
Municipal Reform Act passed, 1835, by Lord Melbourne, complement to Reform Act, i. 132
Muntz, Mr., death of, 1857, ii. 177
Murchison, Sir Roderick, invites Cobden to St. Petersburg, i. 438
Mutiny, Indian, Cobden on, 1857, ii. 186-8

Nantes, ii. 238
Nantes, Edict of, i. 265
Napier, Sir George, i. 453
Naples, Cobden at, i. 467; king of, ii. 31
Napoleon, ii. 105
Napoleon, Louis, i. 414; ii. 109; and Free Trade, 228 *note*; reasons for assenting to the treaty, 240; wishes to submit the draft of the treaty to the Legislative Body, 248; Cobden's audience with, 1860, 267-9; French treaty, 299; Cobden's conversation with, French treaty, 1860, 315; writings of, 344; Cobden's last interview with, 360
Napoleon, Prince, complains of Lord

Palmerston's fortification speech, ii. 307-8
Napoleonic legend, ii. 111
Narbonne, Cobden at, i. 452
Navigation Laws follow the Corn Laws, i. 513
Nelson, Lord, ii. 105, 111
Nesselrode, Count, i. 483
New York, ii. 473
Newcastle, Cobden at, i. 309
Newcastle Journal, the, i. 293 *note*
Newman, Dr., i. 99
Niagara, Cobden's description of, 1835, i. 38-40
Nice, Cobden at, i. 453; annexation of, to France, ii. 265
Nile, Cobden sails up, Dec. 4, 1836; scenery of, i. 60
Nishni Novgorod, description of, Aug. 27, 1847, i. 485-6
Nonconformists and the Crimean War, ii. 130
Normanby, Lord, i. 412
North, Lord, i. 432
Northern counties, between 4000 and 5000 electors added to, 1845, i. 329
Northern Star, the, ii. 21
Norwich, i. 293, ii. 103
Nothomb, M., i. 477
Nottingham, i. 264
Novello, Clara, ii. 283

O'Connell, i. 449; rouses Ireland by the cry of Repeal, 291, ii. 56, 459
Ogilvie, R. A., sent on a commission to France, ii. 277
Opinion, popular, misgivings of, about Cobden and Bright, ii. 136
Orleanists, the, ii. 285
Osborn, Mr., chairman of Illinois railway, visits Cobden at Dunford, 1858, ii. 203
Oxford, Cobden's visits to, in 1853, ii. 117, 121

Padiham, i. 27
Palmer, Roundell, ii. 150
Palmerston, Lord, i. 161, 385; ii. 33, 39, 44, 61, 71, 74, 87, 97, 98, 100, 146, 208, 233, 238, 248; substituted for Lord Aberdeen, 1847, i. 502; his policy with regard to Portugal, 509; account of his political life, ii. 30; and the Spanish Government, 31; failure of his policy, 31; foreign policy approved of by a majority of 46, ii. 43; and the Queen, 79; carries an amendment on the Militia Bill, 80; and the invasion panic, 100; Eastern Question, 123; Prime Minister, 1855, 125; Eastern Policy, 126; concentration of war at Sebastopol, 126; Russian War policy, and Cobden, 127; presides at Napier's banquet, 128; flippancy towards Cobden and Bright, 128; durability of Ministry, 1855, 136; resigns, defeated on Cobden's motion, 1857, 169; victory of, 1857, 172; defeat of, on Conspiracy to Murder Bill, Feb. 20, 1858, 198; distrust of France, 294; French treaty, 1860, 301; speech on aggressive France, 304; offers Baronetcy or Privy Councillorship to Cobden, March 26, 1861, 323; luck of, 396; statement on Schleswig-Holstein affair, June 27, 1864, 446; humiliating position of, 447; on the death of Cobden, 480; Cobden's battles with, 484
Palmerston, Lady, ii. 215
Pamphlets, the two, written by Cobden, consideration of, i. 97; Cobden's, their application to English policy, 103; consideration of Cobden's first, 105-22; Cobden's, on Russia, 110. *Few Observations on Invasion*, ii. 102; *Brief Suggestions for a Reserve Force*, 102; *Short Notes on National Defence*, 102; *Plain Proposals for a Maritime Militia*, 102; *Thoughts on the Peril of Portsmouth*, 102; *1793 and 1853*, 106
Panics, The Three, ii. 121, 370
Papal Aggression, account of the, ii. 45
Paris, Peace Congress held there in 1849, ii. 12; Treaty of, 155
Parkes, Joseph, of Birmingham, i. 149
Parliament of 1841, dissolution of, i. 187; feeling of, 319; scene in the House of Commons on the Corn Law agitation, 277-9; proceedings, in 1846, 390; meets, Nov. 4, 1852 ii. 94; meets, June 7, 1859, 208
Parties, political, 1830-1841, i. 182; state of, 1846, 382
Partridge and Price, Cobden enters warehouse of, in 1828, i. 16
Paschal, Captain, anecdote of a, Feb. 1826, i. 13
Passports, abolition of, ii. 317
Paulton, Mr., ii. 462, 478
Peace movement and Free Trade, i. 248
Peace movement, misrepresentation of, ii. 118
Peace Society, ii. 23
Peel's, Sir Robert, speech on Corn Law agitation, March 18, 1839, i. 162-3; advance in his opinion on Corn Laws, 185; views of, on

corn question, 196; proposals to his cabinet, 1842, 232; proposals unsatisfactory to League, 235-7; proposal an insult to country, 238; effigy burned, 238; a Free Trader, 255; position of, 255; budget of, 1842, 255; Cobden's impression of, 259; Cobden thinks him willing to listen, 261; Cobden a thorn in his side, 262; Cobden meets arguments, 263; replies to Cobden, 266; peroration of his speech in answer to Cobden, 279 *note*; his character, 280; accepts Cobden's explanation, 281; unfavourable criticism of the Tories in Oxford, 284; says repeal not wanted, 315; a trimmer, 315; Cabinet summoned after Edinburgh Letter, 1845, 365; goes to Windsor after Lord John Russell's failure to form Ministry, 371; champion of Protestantism, repealer of Test and Corporation Acts, 373; and his party, 1845, 373; inconsistencies, 374; speeches in vindication of Free Trade policy, 375; Bill, first reading of, 1846, great majority of Free Traders, 383; advises his followers to grant the Game Law Committee, 340; proposes lower prices, 346; dislike of Mr. Disraeli's character, 348; introduces the grant to the Catholic College at Maynooth, 350; autumn of 1845 turning-point in career of, 362; resignation of, after Edinburgh Letter, Dec. 5, 1845, 365; withdraws his resignation, Dec. 20, 1845, 371; his position with his party, 1845, 372-3; conversion to Free Trade principles, 375; League and, 377; reconciliation of, to Cobden, 380; explanation regarding Cobden, 1846, 380; Cobden's expression of regret, 380; followers of, 382; no conception of intense feeling about Free Trade, 1846, 383; position, difficulties of, 385; ministry, doom of, 386; an earnest convert, 393; speech on the necessity of a new commercial system, Jan. 22, 1846, 401; announces his resignation in a remarkable speech, June 29, 1846, 416; all letters carefully preserved, 419 *note*; reply, June 24, 1846, to Cobden's letter of June 23, 1846, 426-30; speech on his commercial policy, 1848, 512; ii. 38, 40 *note*, 42; death of, 45; referred to, 96, 101, 116, 223, 232; and commercial treaty with France, 327; sober politics of, 352

Peelites in favour of non-intervention, ii. 124

Pekin, English ambassador at, ii. 377

People's Budget, an outline sketched by Cobden, i. 532-3

Perkins, Mr., Cobden visited by, at Smyrna, i. 82

Perpignan, Cobden at, i. 452

Persigny, M. de, on commercial reform in France, ii. 238; and the state of opinion in England, 248; on the empire, 287; diplomatic difficulties in England, 308; abolition of passport question, 317

Perth, Cobden at, i. 308

Peschiera, fortress of, ii. 257

Petitti, Count, i. 468

"Peveril of the Peak" coach, i. 17

Philanthropists, Cobden's attacks on the, i. 200, 202

Phrenologist, The, play written by Cobden, i. 28

Phrenology. *See* Combe, George.

Piedmont, ii. 268

Piræus, fleet despatched to, ii. 40

Pitt, Cobden contrasts, with Lord Palmerston, ii. 321; commercial treaty with France, 1786, 332

Polish insurrection, 1863, ii. 401

Political changes, 1853, ii. 121

Political life, condition of, ii. 343

Political torpor, 1863, ii. 415

Ponsonby, Lord, i. 83

Poor, rural, condition of, i. 170

Pope and Free Trade, i. 464; receives Cobden, conversation with him, 1847, 464

Portpatrick, Cobden goes to, Feb. 1826, i. 13

Ports not to be open until 1849, i. 381

Portsmouth, fortifications of, ii. 409

Portugal, ii. 41

Potsdam, Cobden goes to, drives with King, i. 479

Press, hostilities in the, 1839, i. 168

Price, Partridge and, Cobden enters warehouse of, 1826, i. 16

Privateering, ii. 417

Protection, petition for, i. 382

Protectionists, anger of, after first reading of Peel's Repeal Bill, i. 384; led by Mr. Disraeli after the death of Lord George Bentinck in 1848, 513; do not accept defeat till 1852, 513; in office, ii. 79-99; disfavour of the budget with, 115

Provincial Letters of Pascal, i. 335

Prussia, the treasurer of the Zollverein; great power of, 1838, i. 140; Cobden's views on the government of, 141; exportation of corn from, ii. 107

Public opinion, excitement of, 1852, ii. 102
Pulsky, ii. 76
Punch, cartoon of Cobden, i. 368
Pusey, Dr., i. 99
Pyramids, Cobden's description of, i. 60

Quakers and peace movement, ii. 118
Quarterly Review, the, i. 275
Quay Street, Manchester, residence of Cobden in, i. 171
Queen, the, and Lord Palmerston, ii. 79

Radical party, ii. 119
Radical politics, Mr. Mill and, i. 99
Radicalism, economic, and the new Cabinet, ii. 99
Radicals, blunders of, their characteristics, i. 137; and Crimean War, ii. 130
Rangoon, ii. 86
Reform, French parliamentary, i. 446
Reform, parliamentary, proposals for, ii. 60
Reform Act, the, of 1832, i. 269; influence of, on society, 97-8; restlessness, mental activity after, and wishes for social regeneration, 98-9
Reform Bill, Disraeli's, ii. 207
Reform Club, opinion of Cobden, i. 261
Register, great difference to Cobden's party by improvement of, i. 327
Repeal, petition for, i. 382; public opinion of, 383
Revel, Count, i. 468
Revolution, omens of, in Paris, 1846, i. 446
Ricardo, J. L., i. 283; Free Trader, ii. 327
Richmond, Duke of, i. 412
Ridgway, i. 46; ii. 115
Riga, Cobden goes to, i. 483
Rochdale, ii. 207; deputation from, 211; speech at, 460
Roebuck, Mr., i. 148, 263; Cobden thinks him "a clever fellow," 149; Cobden's estimate of, as Free Trader, 196; speech on the League, Feb. 17, 1843, 281; ii. 491
Rogers, Thorold, ii. 462 *note*
Romagna, ii. 257
Rome, Cobden at, Jan. 1847, i. 456-65
Rosario Villa, Cobden's Maltese guide, 1836, i. 52
Rossi, Count, i. 458, 465
Rossini, ii. 283
Rouher, M., ii. 227, 236, 248, 271, 282, 291, 306; signs the French treaty, 251; Lord Palmerston's fortification speech, 307; French treaty, 310; French navy, 362
Russell, Lord Charles, i. 296
Russell, Lord John, i. 161; moves to establish a fixed duty on wheat, May 7, 1841, 184; speech, Feb. 17, 1843, 280; introduces nine resolutions with a view to improving the working class, 339; supports the Maynooth Grant, 351; famous letter of, on duty of the Government, 1845, 363; comes round to Cobden's programme, 364; Queen sends for, Dec. 1845, 369; offers Cobden (prospectively) Vice-Presidency of Board of Trade, Dec. 19, 1845, 369; attempts to form Government, 1845, 371; unable to form Ministry, Dec. 19, 1845, 371; and Irish Coercion Bill, 386; and Peel, difference between, as statesmen, 393; offers posts to three of Peel's colleagues, 432; letter to Cobden, July 2, 1846, reasons for not asking him to join the Cabinet, 432; offers Mr. Gibson the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade, 433; and the Papal Aggression, ii. 45; resigns, Feb. 22, 1851, 56 *note*; his Durham letter, 58; referred to, 80, 87, 97, 245, 295; brings in another Militia Bill, 101; Eastern Question, 123; and Lord Palmerston, rivalry between, 124; resignation of, 125; brings in a Reform Bill, 292; armaments, 302
Russia, Cobden's first pamphlet on, 1836, i. 45; Cobden's pamphlet on, advocates non-interference between Russia and Turkey, 110; Poland and, 111; false ideas of Russian power, 111; power of, 1847, Cobden's opinion, 456; ii. 34, 39, 40
Rye, meeting at, i. 297

Sabden, Cobden's firm takes factory at, 1829, i. 21; Cobden's interest in public affairs at, 1832, 25
Sacchi, Signor G., i. 468
St.-Cloud, Cobden at, ii. 227
St. Petersburg, Cobden goes to, i. 483; account of his visit to, 489-94
Salevi, Signor, i. 470
Salisbury, Cobden at, i. 298
Savoy question, ii. 266; annexation of, ii. 293, 353
Say, Horace, i. 451
Scheffer, Ary, studies of, ii. 283
Scheldt, the, ii. 106
Schleswig-Holstein, ii. 444; Lord Palmerston on, 446
Schneider, M., ii. 282
Schofield, Mr., ii. 46

Scialoja, Signor, i. 468
Scio, massacre in island of, i. 74-5
Scotland and the League, i. 271; people of, enthusiastic about the outgoing of Chalmers from the Establishment, 291; ii. 46
Scott, Sir Walter, and Cobden, 1826, i. 14; ii. 106
Sebastopol Committee, ii. 125
Sectarian organ, inconvenience of a, ii. 380
Sergent, M., i. 454
Session of 1846, opening of, i. 381
Sharpe, Mr., stays with, ii. 16
Sheffield, ii. 22
Shelburne, Lord, the precursor of Cobden's school, i. 119; his enthusiasm for Free Trade and peace, 120
Shrewsbury, Cobden's first business journey to, Oct. 21, 1825, i. 8
Silesia, i. 481
Simmonds, Mr., i. 82
Slagg, Mr., ii. 273, 483
Smith, Adam, i. 119; ii. 461
Smith, Goldwin, ii. 469, 483
Smyrna, Cobden's voyage to, i. 79; visiting at, 80; Feb. 1837, markets, 81; conversation with Mr. Perkins on Trade, 82-4
Socialism, principles of, applied in England, i. 326; English forms of, 326
Somerville, Mr., ii. 21
Southampton, banquet at, ii. 70
Spain, ii. 41
Spanish Government and Lord Palmerston, ii. 31
Spectator, the, i. 414; ii. 86
Staffordshire, miners of, i. 264
Stamford, disturbances at, i. 167
Standard, the, ii. 114
Stanley, Lord, i. 234, 277, 366, 412; withdraws from Peel's Cabinet, Dec. 1845, 372; and Protectionists, 383; ii. 56 *note*
Star newspaper, ii. 380
Statistics of agitation, i. 312-13
Stephenson, ii. 489
Stettin, Cobden goes to, i. 480
Stockport, Cobden's name before people of, 1837, i. 123; Cobden a candidate for, defeated, 1837, 126; election for, 1841, 190
Stoke, potters of, i. 264
Stone, Mr., i. 400
Stourbridge, glass-cutters of, i. 264
Struggle, The, a paper issued in Preston, description of, i. 229
Sturge, Mr., ii. 149
Subscription to Cobden, 1860, ii. 273
Sugar Duties, Cobden attacks, i. 304; West Indian, protection on, follows Corn Law (Act passed in 1848), 513
Suleiman Pasha, i. 414
Sumner, Charles, ii. 179
Sussex, Cobden in, 1857, ii. 175
Sussex Archæological Society, ii. 468
Sweden, ii. 111
Switzerland, Cobden's first visit to, 1834, i. 30; ii. 41, 111

Tait, W., i. 135, 139
Tamworth Letter, 1847, i. 375
Tariff, French, revision of, ii. 309; delay in signing, 1860, 311; signed, Nov. 16, 1860, 313; reception of, in England, 319
Tariff, new, Peel's, its principles, i. 256
Tauroggen, Cobden at, i. 483
Taylor, Mr., ii. 18
Tea-parties, meetings and, i. 271
Telegraph, Daily, ii. 381, 440
Tellkampf, Prof., Cobden meets, i. 478
Temperance movement, ii. 25
Ten Hours Bill becomes law, 1847, i. 326
Tennyson, Mr., ii. 149
Testimonial, national, to Cobden, of between £75,000 and £80,000, 1846, i. 443
Thackeray, Cobden nearly secures services of, i. 230; a candidate for Oxford, ii. 181
Thiers, M., ii. 249
Thomasson, Mr., of Bolton, ii. 103, 483; assists Cobden, 204; Illinois Central shares, 204; aids Cobden by further loans, 205; munificence of, 205
Thompson, Colonel, i. 309
Thomson, C. P. (Lord Sydenham), i. 136, 149
Thouvenel, M., ii. 305
Thucydides and *The Times*, ii. 430
Times, The, i. 275, 341; mocks at League, 234; proposes total repeal, Dec. 4, 1845, 367; ii. 48, 71, 72, 73, 76, 102, 114, 115, 142; and the Kossuth demonstration, 77; Delane, editor of, 136; war correspondence of, 148; American War, 390; charge of, against Mr. Bright, 422; controversy, merits of, 438; policy of, 440
Tocqueville on the right of secession, ii. 381
Tories, the, feeling of, about Corn Laws, i. 244
Townsend, Colonel, i. 484
Tracts, Free Trade, circulation of, i. 312
Travenmunde, Cobden arrives at, i. 494
Treaty, commercial, with France, policy of, ii. 326, 337; Mr. Glad-

stone, 327; Mr. Disraeli, 328; Question, state of, 1843, 328; and Free Trade, 329; effected, 331; Pitt's, 1786, 332; Cobden's, peculiarity of, 333; double operation of, 335; bottom of, 335
Treaty, the French, ii. 220, 296, 300, 304; signed, Oct. 12, 1860, 313
Trent affair, ii. 382
Trieste, i. 471; reception of Cobden at, 472
Trinitarians, i. 319
Troplong, M., ii. 248
Tuileries, ii. 241
Turin, Cobden at, i. 467
Turkey, Cobden in, i. 76-87; affairs of, ii. 123; debate on, 1863, Cobden and, 400
Turkish Question, the, 1861, ii. 350
Tyrrell, Sir John, follower of Peel, i. 299

Unitarians, i. 317
United States, Cobden's visit to, 1835, i. 33; his opinions about, 33-38
Urquhart, Mr., the Secretary to British Legation at Constantinople, account of, i. 83; his book the provocation of Cobden's pamphlets, 110
Usage, the great, as defined by Kinglake, i. 112-115

Venetia and Austria; Italy, ii. 259-63
Venice, Cobden's reception at, i. 470
Victoria, Queen, accession to throne, 1837, i. 123
Vienna, Cobden at, dines with Prince Metternich, i. 473; conversation with, 473
Vienna Conference, 1855, ii. 125
Villafranca, Peace of, ii. 233, 257
Villiers, Charles, i. 299, 327, 339; moves in House of Commons that petitions against the Corn Laws be referred to a Committee of the whole House, rejected, Feb. 18, 1839, i. 160; his annual motion on importation of corn, Mar. 12, 1839, rejection of, 161; the leader in Parliament of the agitation, 198; proposes that there shall be no duty on corn, Feb. 18, 1842, 239; annual motion of, rejection, 1844, 315; proposal that repeal be immediate, lost, Mar. 1846, 390; declines office, 1846, 433
Vostizza, i. 91

Wages, in 1847, i. 501
Wakley, ii. 459
Wales, visit to, i. 437; Cobden in, ii. 162
Walewski, Count, ii. 241, 245, 247
Wallace, Mr., i. 262
Walmsley, ii. 24
Walpole, Mr., ii. 207
War of Independence, Hungarian, account of, ii. 32
War of 1793, ii. 106
War with Russia declared, 1854, ii. 125
Warren, Mr., i. 479
Watt, James, ii. 489
Webster, Daniel, i. 36; ii. 28
Weekly Dispatch, the, ii. 86
Wellington, Duke of, Corn Bill, his, 1828, i. 179; death of, Sept. 14, 1852, ii. 92, 100, 111
West Indian sugar-growers, i. 304
West Riding, Cobden elected for, 1847, i. 497; resolves not to stand again for, ii. 66
Westmeon, near Alton, Hampshire, settlement at, by Cobden's father, 1814, i. 4; poverty of home at, 6; Cobden spends holiday at, Oct. 22, 1826, 14; Cobden leaves for Farnham, 1827, 15
Wheat, price of, Aug. 1838, i. 156; increase of pauperism, 156; prices of, 336
Wheathampstead, i. 294
Whig Ministry, fall of, ii. 80
Whigs, coldness of, for local self-government, i. 136; defeat of, 1841, 186; distrust of, 311; and Free Traders, 367; attitude of, 388; as Free Traders, 389
Whiting, Mr., ii. 413
Whitworth's, Mr., guns, ii. 270
William IV., death of, June 20, 1837, i. 123
Williams, Catherine Anne, Cobden marries, May 1840, i. 173
Willis's Rooms, ii. 208
Wilson, James, i. 313
Winchester, Cobden at, i. 298
Witts, the De, ii. 490
Wochusett affair, ii. 465
Women, rights of, ii. 360
Workers, fellow, of Cobden, why seemingly ignored, i. 206
Working men of London address, ii. 74

Yeovil, glovers of, i. 264
Yosemite valley, ii. 415 *note*

Zollverein, Cobden's opinion of effect of, i. 140; ii. 334
Zurich, treaties of, ii. 257

Printed by R. & R. Clark, Limited, *Edinburgh.*

17751

DA
536
C6
M7
vol.2

MORLEY, JOHN

DATE DUE

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Colby-Sawyer College Library
The life of Richard Cobden,
GEN DA536.C6 M7
Morley, John, 1 c.1 v.2
3 3469 00028 1673